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WHEN THE WEAK CHALLENGE THE STRONG:
THE NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR CRISIS

by

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This thesis examines the political behavior of weak states in crises through a detailed case study of the recent North Korean nuclear crisis. In the early 1990s, North Korea initiated a political challenge that threatened both U.S. nonproliferation and South Korean defense interests. North Korea manipulated the shared risks of the ensuing crisis to achieve political objectives rather than military victory, which was unobtainable due to U.S. and South Korean defense efforts. It is puzzling how a small state, such as North Korea, could nevertheless successfully challenge more powerful states and not be punished. Indeed, North Korea was rewarded for its challenge. Asymmetric conflict theory states that a weaker state, even after assessing its disadvantages vis-à-vis an opponent, can successfully challenge stronger adversaries to political and strategic advantage. In the North Korean nuclear crisis, its limited aims/fait accompli strategy—namely, developing nuclear weapons and gaining economic benefits from the West—and changing domestic politics were the driving force behind its challenge. The findings of this study provide some theoretical insights as well as policy implications for the United States and South Korea in their policy toward North Korean nuclear behavior.

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WHEN THE WEAK CHALLENGE THE STRONG: THE NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR CRISIS

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the political behavior of weak states in crises through a detailed case study of the recent North Korean nuclear crisis. In the early 1990s, North Korea initiated a political challenge that threatened both U.S. nonproliferation and South Korean defense interests. North Korea manipulated the shared risks of the ensuing crisis to achieve political objectives rather than military victory, which was unobtainable due to U.S. and South Korean defense efforts. It is puzzling how a small state, such as North Korea, could nevertheless successfully challenge more powerful states and not be punished. Indeed, North Korea was rewarded for its challenge. Asymmetric conflict theory states that a weaker state, even after assessing its disadvantages vis-à-vis an opponent, can successfully challenge stronger adversaries to political and strategic advantage. In the North Korean nuclear crisis, its limited aims/fait accompli strategy—namely, developing nuclear weapons and gaining economic benefits from the West—and changing domestic politics were the driving force behind its challenge. The findings of this study provide some theoretical insights as well as policy implications for the United States and South Korea in their policy toward North Korean nuclear behavior.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

North Korea has long proclaimed its right to use force to unify the Korean Peninsula. The United States and South Korea successfully have deterred war initiation by Pyongyang. However, the U.S.-South Korean deterrent posture—maintaining military superiority and a credible retaliatory threat—has failed to deter North Korea's manipulation of the shared risk of a military crisis in order to make significant political gains. The recent North Korean nuclear crisis is a clear example of such a case. North Korea's latent nuclear capability endangered U.S. and South Korean interests in global nonproliferation and regional stability. After a lengthy period of negotiations, North Korea was able to use its nuclear program as leverage to wrench economic concessions from the West. This thesis examines how a small state, such as North Korea, could outmaneuver much stronger states in a crisis.

This thesis surveys theoretical arguments about the behavior of weaker states in crises, and then provides a detailed examination of North Korea's motivations for its initiation of the nuclear crisis. Balance of power and power transition theories imply that a preponderance of power or even power parity will prevent challenges from weaker states. Deterrence theory also suggests that a state will not initiate a crisis that it foresees losing. It assumes that policies that are potent enough to deter military attacks would certainly be potent enough to deter lesser threats. Thus these theories regard the weaker state's offensive challenge as a rare occurrence.

The theory of asymmetric conflicts implies that a weaker state, even after correctly assessing its disadvantages compared to its opponent, may challenge stronger adversaries—not for military victory but for political advantage. Its choices are made within the realm of rational calculations. There are five critical

variables that affect these choices. They are (1) limited aims/fait accompli strategy, (2) offensive or deterrent capability, (3) great power support, (4) domestic power structure, and (5) the degree of coercive pressure from stronger opponents.

The key motivations for North Korea's political challenge were its belief in the success of a limited aims/ fait accompli strategy—namely, developing nuclear weapons secretly, and then gaining economic benefits from the West. Declining economic, military, and diplomatic assets greatly aggravated North Korea's domestic political difficulties and the legitimacy of its leadership and governing regime. The development of nuclear weapons and the pursuit of economic aid from the West were means of promoting the legitimacy of the North Korean leadership and the regime. Its domestic situation, therefore, induced North Korea's initiation of the nuclear crisis. Its offensive and deterrent capability and China's support also influenced North Korea's calculations regarding crisis initiation. External threat had less influence. While the U.S. nuclear threat was the most important motivation for North Korea's nuclear weapons program, the real threats have not come from the external but from the internal arena at least since the 1980s. International pressures (including economic sanctions) to accept IAEA inspections were not the causes of the nuclear crisis, but were responses to North Korea's crisis initiation.

The findings of this study have limited applications. For a more generalized understanding of North Korean political challenges, one would need to compare the results of this study with other crises, such as the *Pueblo* incident in 1968, the downing of the EC-121 aircraft, or the recent violation by North Korea of the armistice, and the related military incursions. This study, however, does provide some valuable lessons. Both the United States and South Korea need to develop a policy that shows their united firmness, while not

encouraging the North to perceive new threats. Next, the understanding of motivations can guide the formulation of effective policy toward political challenges. Once a policy is chosen, it should be employed in the early stage of the crisis, because the motivations of a political challenger may change, and its demands for concessions from the defender may also increase. Finally, multilateral cooperation is an important factor in employing a policy against political challenges. It is especially important to have one country's leadership in forming a united front against the challenger.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis explains the motivations for recent political challenges by North Korea, a small state, against the United States and South Korea, an alliance of much stronger states. During the North Korean nuclear crisis, Pyongyang's recalcitrant bargaining posture toward the United States and South Korea inspired questions about how a weaker state could challenge a stronger state, even when such a challenge would provoke a serious crisis that could endanger the very existence of the weaker state.

This study examines the phenomenon of "asymmetric conflict," that is, "a conflict involving two states with unequal overall military and economic power resources."[1] The theory of asymmetric conflict implies that a weaker state, inferior in overall economic and military capabilities, can successfully initiate conflict against much stronger powers under certain conditions. The objective of this thesis is to identify the conditions and variables that help explain the North Korean nuclear crisis, a case in which a weaker state successfully challenged stronger states in political terms and was not punished by the stronger states.

A. BACKGROUND

Although there is a vast literature on war between nations, there have been few attempts to define and theorize asymmetric conflicts. The major literature on the behavior

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[1]Paul, T. V., Asymmetric Conflicts: War Initiation by Weaker Powers (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 20. An initiator of political challenge is a nation that makes a conscious decision to produce a crisis and manipulates the shared risk of escalation into a more serious crisis or even war. This study defines international conflict as "any interaction delimited in time and space, involving two or more international entities (whether states or transnational actors) which possess non-identical preference orderings over one or most sets of alternative choices." This definition of international conflicts encompasses some specific types of international conflict such as crisis, war, and protracted social conflict. Patrick James, Crisis and War (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press,1988), 5.

of states in international relations regards self-determined, offensive challenges from weaker states against stronger states as unusual, if not impossible. As Thucydides put it 2,400 years ago,

> ... right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in powers, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.[2]

Thus small states, because of their lack of power, have only had defensive ambitions, or have been unable to achieve their political goals vis-à-vis most other states.[3]

In reality, weak states often challenge stronger states. In the case of disputes over fishing, Iceland and Peru have successfully resisted British and American pressures. North Korea challenged the United States with impunity in the Pueblo incident, and Serbia risked the wrath of Austria before World War I.[4] T. V. Paul argues that, in the context of military-economic asymmetry between two antagonistic states, the weaker state can challenge and initiate war against the stronger state.[5] In most cases, weaker states challenge stronger states for political advantage, rather than for military victory.

The North Korean nuclear crisis is a typical example of a political challenge initiated by a weaker state. Since 1989, when U.S. intelligence discovered disturbing signs that North Korea's nuclear bomb program was seriously progressing, an impending nuclear crisis overshadowed the Korean peninsula, especially when North Korea declared

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[2]Thucydides. The History of the Peloponnesian War, trans. Richard Crowley (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1950), Book V, Chap.17.

[3]Thomas Fleiner, Die Kleinstaaten in den Staatenverbindungen des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts (Zurich: Polygraphischer Verlag, 1966), 27; Raymond Aron, Peace and War, trans. Richard Howard and Annette Baker Fox (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), 83; cited in Michael Handel, Weak States in the International System (London: Frank Cass, 1981), 37.

[4]Handel, Weak States in the International System, 39.

[5]Paul, Asymmetric Conflicts, 35.

its intention to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in March 1993. Years of subsequent international anxiety that an unpredictable North Korea might provoke nuclear disaster ended with the signing of the "Agreed Framework" on October 21, 1994, between the United States and North Korea. The negotiation was expected to be "a textbook case on how to curb the spread of nuclear arms."[6] Harsh criticisms, however, soon followed the agreement.

Most critics were angered by North Korea's deliberate exploitation of the political and diplomatic interests of the United States in nuclear nonproliferation. Republicans in the U.S. Congress accused the accord as the "administration's capitulations to dictators."[7] William Safire criticized President Clinton for being forced to retreat by North Korea's threat of war. In payment for that blackmail, Safire continued, the United States agreed to supply North Korea with $100 million worth of oil each year and build $4 billion worth of two light-water reactors, which "apologists claim would make it terribly difficult to produce weapons-grade plutonium, though experts disagree."[8]

To make matters worse, the "Agreed Framework" was only the beginning of another diplomatic crisis. The United States was frustrated again when North Korea threatened to end its four-month old agreement "if Washington tried to force it to accept

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[6]New York Times, October 19, 1994, P. A14. President Clinton also praised the deal as "good for the United States, good for its allies, and good for the safety of the entire world." Mitchell Reiss, Bridled Ambition: Why Countries Constrain Their Nuclear Capabilities (Washington, D. C.: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995), 300.

[7]See Elaine Sciolino, "Clinton's $4 billion Carrot," New York Times, October 19, 1994.

[8]William Safire, "Clinton's Concessions," New York Times, October 24, 1994, P.A15. Gary Milhollin made same arguments that these light water reactors in fact make more bomb grade plutonium than the graphite reactors North Korea has now. " That is why we safeguard all of the light water reactors around the world." Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearing before East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Implications of the U.S. North Korea Nuclear Agreement, 103rd Cong., 2nd Sess., Dec. 1, 1994 (Washington , D.C. : U.S. GPO, 1995), 57.

South Korean reactors."[9] Even at the time of this writing (June 1996), North Korea continues its recalcitrant negotiating posture in meetings with the United States.

North Korea has a notorious reputation for direct offensive challenges against the United States: the Pueblo incident in 1968, the shooting down of the EC-121 aircraft in 1969, and the ax-slaying incident at the Panmunjom area in 1976.[10] Moreover, North Korea has not been punished by the United States for any of these challenges. It is puzzling how such a small and impoverished country can confront a much stronger power, and manage to retain the upper hand in negotiations. North Korea has made some of the most obvious examples of a politically offensive challenge; however, it is not the only country to do so.

Other examples include Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal against Great Britain and France in 1956, and Libya's persistent and public involvement with international terrorism despite strong warnings from the United States. Panama, headed by Manuel Antonio Noriega, also challenged the United States by systematically violating the American-Panamanian canal treaties, harassing U.S. forces, and trafficking in drugs. Moreover, a number of brinkmanship crises were initiated by weaker states,[11] including Iraq's behavior during the Persian Gulf Crisis of 1990-91.

On the Korean peninsula, both the United States and South Korea have employed general deterrence as their main policy against North Korea, and have successfully

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[9]Steven Greenhouse,"U.S. Presses North Korea On Reactors Made by South," New York Times, March 10, 1995.

[10]See Harry Schwartz, "The North Korean Strategy Behind the Pueblo Incident," New York Times, January 29, 1968. Koh, B. C., "The Pueblo Incident in Perspective," Asian Survey 9, no.4 (April 1969): 264-280; "North Korea 1976: Under Stress," Asian Survey 17, no.1 (January 1977): 61-70.

[11]Richard Ned Lebow, Between Peace and War (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 57-97.

deterred Pyongyang's war intentions.[12] Their posture, however, has not deterred North Korea's political challenges, that is, the policy of manipulating the shared risk of crisis in order to achieve specific political objectives rather than a military victory.[13]

The rationale for this study thus comes from the realization that political challenges from weaker states need more attention from the states who maintain a "policy of strength" but fail to prevent those challenges. When do weak states politically challenge states with greater economic and military power, and why do stronger states fail to avert these challenges?

B. VARIABLES AND HYPOTHESES

In this study, the dependent variable is *a political challenge by a weaker state against strong states.*[14] There are five independent variables developed from the asymmetric conflicts theory, which explain the rationale of political challenges by weaker states. They are (1) political-military strategy, (2) offensive or deterrent weapons capability, (3) domestic power structure, (4) support from stronger powers, and (5) coercive pressure from stronger opponents.[15] There are five hypotheses that relate these independent variables to the dependent variable.

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[12]David C. Kang, in "Preventive War and North Korea," Security Studies 4, no.2 (Winter 1994/95): 330-63, asserts that "full-scale war is not an option for the North nor has it been since the mid-1950s" because "the U.S. deterrent was clear and credible."

[13]For more detailed explanations, see Chapter 2.

[14]This study defines the variance in the dependent variable in terms of the presence or the absence of a political challenge.

[15]The variances in the independent variables are defined in terms of the presence or absence of these conditions or states of mind.

Hypothesis 1: The possibility of political challenge is high if a weaker state believes in the efficacy of a successful limited aims/fait accompli strategy.

Hypothesis 2: The possibility of political challenge is high if a weaker state gains enough offensive or deterrent capability that it can inflict significant costs on the strong adversary, thus gaining bargaining leverage.

Hypothesis 3: The possibility of political challenge is relatively high if the power structure changes in a weak state, and when a militaristic group with little legitimacy assumes control of the decision-making process.

Hypothesis 4: The possibility of political challenge is high if a weaker state has strong support from a powerful "third-party" state.

Hypothesis 5: The possibility of political challenge increases if the weaker state believes that the coercive pressure from the stronger state is intolerably high and too expensive to accept.

These hypotheses are tested through a detailed case study of the North Korean nuclear crisis.

C. METHODOLOGY

This study employs the "crucial case" study method, developed by Harry Eckstein, to perform a tough theory test with only one case. If the tested theory is valid, its predicted outcome in the candidate crucial case study should be obtained.[16] Eckstein noted that a single case study can invalidate or confirm a theory if it is strategically selected and properly carried out.[17] In other words, the single case study by itself is capable of providing "a rigorous, decisive form of hypothesis testing," if such a case "fits"

[16]Alexander L. George, "Case Studies and Theory Development: The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison," in Paul Gordon Lauren, ed., Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy (New York: Free Press, 1979), 53. George also provides a rigorous case study methodology in the same article.

[17]Harry Eckstein, "Case Study and Theory in Political Science," in F. I. Greenstein and N. W. Polsby, eds., Handbook of Political Science,VII (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1975): 79-138. The discussion of crucial cases appears on 113-123.

the existing theory better than any other rule or theory. Finally, a well-selected single case can represent a large number of cases from the same theoretical group.[18]

The North Korean nuclear crisis is explained better by the asymmetric conflicts theory than by other theories. For example, the balance of power theory and deterrence theory state that the strength of the United States and South Korea should subdue North Korean political challenges. Both theories assume that the weaker state will not launch a war that it anticipates losing. The theory of asymmetric conflicts, however, predicts that North Korea can successfully challenge the stronger states by making choices that are within the realm of rational calculations.

Therefore, the North Korean nuclear case can be viewed in the theoretical context of a larger number of asymmetric conflicts. The results of this thesis can be compared with other studies on asymmetric conflicts in political terms, suggesting more plausible motivations for the political challenges of weaker states.

D. THESIS ORGANIZATION

The remaining thesis is organized as follows. Chapter II defines the key concepts. Chapter III examines the behaviors of weaker states according to the balance of power and deterrence theories, and presents arguments to these theories. Chapter IV provides the theoretical framework of political challenge. It provides key assumptions and develops main hypotheses. Chapter V surveys the historical background of the North Korean nuclear crisis and analyzes the perceived dangers of the crisis in global and regional terms.

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[18]Arend Lijphart, "The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research," Comparative Political Studies 8, no.2 (July 1975): 160, says that "the single cases investigated in case studies are usually viewed in the theoretical context of a larger number of cases: a case study is a study of a certain problem, proposition, or theory, and a case belongs to a larger category of cases." H. A. Scarrow, Comparative Political Analysis: An Introduction (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 7. even claims that a case study may be labeled "comparative" if "the analysis is made within a comparative perspective [which] mandates that description of the particular be cast in terms of broadly applicable analytic constructs."

Chapter VI tests hypotheses against the nuclear crisis. This chapter treats the independent variables separately. Each variable is analyzed precisely, as if it were a single case study, and each result is compared with other factors. In this way the particular contribution that each makes to the initiation of North Korea's political challenge can be discerned and understood. The concluding chapter provides North Korea's rationale for political challenge and some theoretical, as well as policy, implications.

II. DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

Before examining the hypotheses further, the main concepts behind the variables should be defined. This chapter defines the key concepts in the dependent variable, a political challenge initiated by a weaker state, and in the five independent variables, political-military strategy, offensive or deterrent capability, domestic power structure, support from stronger powers, and coercive pressure from the stronger adversary.

Political Challenge. In this study, political challenge is defined as a policy of manipulating the shared risk of crisis in order to achieve specific political objectives.[19] A weaker state will challenge a stronger state depending on the prospects for political victory.[20] If force is used or threatened, it takes the form of symbolic use of limited military actions to persuade the opponent to back down. This is similar to the coercive diplomacy of strong powers, in which force is used only for political or diplomatic goals, and not for a major military victory.[21]

Political challenges easily result in crisis because the cost of disengagement is too high for the challenged nation in strategic and economic terms. Moreover, disengagement may damage the challenged nation's bargaining reputation.[22] The concept of crisis is best defined by Brecher:

> A crisis [actor-level] is a breakpoint along the peace-war continuum of a state's relations with any other international actor(s). A crisis is a situation

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[19]This definition is conceptualized from Lebow's study of brinkmanship. See Lebow, Between Peace and War, 57-97.

[20]Paul, Asymmetric Conflicts, 9.

[21]Alexander L. George and William E. Simons, The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 7-11.

[22]Lebow, Between Peace and War, 60.

> with four necessary and sufficient conditions, as these are perceived by the highest level decision-makers of actor concerned: 1. a change in its external or internal environment, which generates 2. a threat to basic values, with a simultaneous or subsequent 3. high probability of involvement in military hostilities, and the awareness of 4. finite time for their response to the external value threat.[23]

The Weaker State. A weak state should be conceptualized before any efforts are made to understand its relationship with stronger states. Many scholars have endeavored to make such a definition. Some suggest upper limits for weak states in terms of population, size of territory, and national income.[24] More sophisticated categories can be arbitrary and difficult to apply to concrete cases.[25] One obvious difficulty in making generalized definitions is that "weak" and "strong" are relative concepts and, thus, subject to great differences in interpretation. However, because asymmetric conflicts involve relatively unequal powers, we need to understand the characteristics, components, and measures of power.

Power. Calculating which actor is stronger requires a detailed understanding of power, or "the ability to influence the behavior of other actors in accordance with one's objectives."[26] It should also be remembered that weakness and strength are relative, not absolute. China may be strong relative to Pakistan or Indonesia, but not compared to the United States. Moreover, power is contextual. Therefore, it is not wise to speak of

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[23]Michael Brecher, "Toward a Theory of International Crisis Behavior: A Preliminary Report," International Studies Quarterly 21, no.1 (March 1977): 39-74. Especially see 43-44.

[24]Handel, Weak States in the International System, 30-46, provides various definitions of weak states.

[25]Peter R. Baehr, "Small States: A Tool for Analysis?" World Politics 27, no.3 (April 1975): 456-466.

[26]John Spanier and Robert L. Wendzel, Games Nations Play (Washington, D. C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1996), 128. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations, 32, provides the same definition. "When we speak of power, we mean man's control over the minds and actions of other men."

power, as an absolute term, "as demonstrated by the outcome of the Vietnam War and American helplessness when OPEC quadrupled oil prices in 1973."[27] Singer explains the contextual nature of power.

> The pen, or the purse, or the army is powerful only if it is used in an appropriate context. A brilliant, logical discourse may influence the behavior of people who hear it in the quiet of a lecture hall, but it could not possibly have any impact on them if they were in the midst of a battle field.[28]

Certain elements of power simply cannot be applied to certain situations. During the Korean War, the nuclear arsenal of the United States failed to prevent a Chinese invasion into Korea. Also, in the North Korean nuclear crisis case, the United States threat of economic sanctions would not be viable if China vetoed it in the UN Security Council. Therefore, power should be assessed in a specific context for policy implications.

The measure of national power as final control over a country's national resources is accepted here.[29] Because it is difficult to measure the intangible degree of influence that nations exercise over other nations, some scholars focus on calculating "potential power." For example, the Correlates of War (COW) data set uses the quantitative measurement system, which includes demographic, industrial, and military sources of power.[30] Because

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[27]Spanier and Wendzel, Games Nations Play, 128-129.

[28]Marshall R. Singer, Weak States in a World of Powers (New York: The Free Press, 1972), 55.

[29]There are three main approaches to the measurement of power: control over resources, control over actors, and control over events and outcomes. See Jeffrey Hart, " Three approaches to the measurement of power in international relations," International Organization 30, no.2 (Spring 1976): 289-305.

[30]In the COW data set, each source has two subdimensions. The demographic dimension includes the nation's total population and the number of people living in cities of 20,000 or larger. The industrial dimension includes both industrial energy consumption, converted into coal-ton equivalents from many sources, and iron and steel production. Finally, the military dimension embraces military personnel on active duty, excluding reserves, and military expenditure over the previous five years. See Stuart A. Bremer, "National Capabilities and War Proneness," The Correlates of War: Testing Some Realpolitik

the industrial and military dimensions are relatively visible and measurable, states are usually classified on the basis of these resources.[31] But not all nations have these key components of power.

This does not mean that subjective factors such as leadership, morale, or resolve are negligible. Balance of forces, for example, is a complex concept that can be expressed not only in the number of divisions and weapon systems, but also in "the small nation's cohesion, its leadership's wisdom and determination, its army's combative moral, preparedness and technical standard," which reflect the quality of its society and international status.[32] Because many of these factors are psychological and intangible, and the means to measure them are not available, they are not counted in this research.[33]

Finally, another dimension of power that deserves to be mentioned is "the law of diminishing strength," which could be phrased as "the farther, the weaker; that is, the farther from home any nation has to operate, the longer will be its line of communication, and the less strength it can put in the field."[34] In extended deterrence (the policy of the United States in South Korea), an immediate or short-term local balance of force has a strong impact on the outcome of a crisis because, if a defender is far from its protégé, the

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Models, vol.2, ed. J. David Singer (New York: Free press, 1980), 57-82. J. David Singer, "Reconstructing the Correlates of War Data Set on Material Capabilities of States, 1816-1985," in Measuring the Correlates of War, ed. J. David Singer and Paul F. Diehl (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 53-72.

[31]Spanier and Wedzel, 53.

[32]Yahanan Cohen, Small Nations in Times of Crisis and Confrontation, trans. Naftali Greenwood (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 332.

[33]Michael P. Sullivan, Power in Contemporary International Politics (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990) identifies questions on the nature and distribution of power among nations. He also presents difficulties in measuring nations' power. See especially 103-109.

[34]Kenneth E. Boulding, Conflict and Defense: A General Theory (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), 230-231.

potential challenger may not feel a serious threat.[35] In sum, since power is relative and contextual, the effective exercise of power is dependent highly on the situation.

Political-Military Strategy. The term "strategy" needs to be defined broadly to encompass both diplomatic and military considerations. Both Clausewitz's definition: "The use of engagements for the object of the war," and Liddell Hart's definition: "The art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the ends of policy" focus on the most efficient use of all available military means to attain a given political objective.[36] Diplomacy is also used to achieve political objectives but, "in the practice of diplomacy, strategy consists of utilizing a variety of resources, not just military forces, in attempting to get an opponent to do something he would not otherwise do."[37]

In crisis management, "winning" a conflict does not have a strictly competitive meaning. It means gaining relative to one's own value system, for instance, by bargaining and by avoiding mutually damaging behavior. Strategy in this sense is not concerned with the efficient application of force, but with the exploitation and threat of potential force.[38]

Political-military strategy relies on a combination of persuasion, accommodation, coercion, diplomacy, and military skill to achieve fundamental policy goals. This strategy

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[35]Huth, Extended Deterrence, 201. The recent Gulf Crisis is a good example. Saddam Hussein was not influenced much by the U.S. maritime power before the invasion of Kuwait. See Arquilla, Dubious Battles, 143.

[36]Carl Von Clausewitz, On War, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 128; B. H. Liddell Hart, Strategy, 2nd. ed. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1968), 335.

[37]See Alexander L. George, Avoiding War (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 17. Liddell Hart also notes the need for higher strategy–grand strategy–to "coordinate and direct all the resources, or band of nations," to achieve policy goals. "Fighting power is but one of the instruments of grand strategy–which should take account of and apply the power of financial pressure, of diplomatic pressure, of commercial pressure, and, not least of ethical pressure, to weaken the opponent's will." Liddell Hart, Strategy, 335-336; The grand strategy deals with the nation's "long-term" interests, while political-military strategy for crisis management is concerned more with solving imminent or short-term problems. Both George and Liddell Hart, however, agree on the need for using all available assets to achieve policy goals.

[38]See Thomas C. Schelling, The Strategy of Conflict (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1994), 4-5.

"may make use of threats of force and may even employ limited force," but the primary concern is to make force "a flexible, refined psychological instrument of policy instead of employing force as a blunt, crude instrument".[39] Typical strategies in this policy include a limited aim/fait accompli, blackmail, brinkmanship, limited probe, and controlled pressure. The practice of these strategies by weaker states somewhat depends on their offensive capability.

Offensive Weapons Capability. Some weapons are designed to be more efficient for either offensive or defensive action.[40] For example, tanks are useful for both offensive and defensive purposes, but they are the ideal weapon for blitzkrieg offensives. However, the distinction between offensive and defensive weapons in terms of characteristic armaments is unclear. The swift offensive character of Napoleonic warfare was due far more to the innovative tactics of Napoleon, such as speed of maneuver than to the weapons systems themselves.[41] As Jervis notes, "Whether a weapon is offensive or defensive often depends on the particular situation," that is, the way in which the weapon is employed. For example, anti-aircraft weapons seem obviously defensive because they have to wait for the opponent to come to them. But the Egyptian attack on Israel in 1973 would have been impossible without air defenses that covered the battlefield.[42] Tanks

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[39]George, Avoiding War, 17.

[40]Sean M. Lynn-Jones, "Offense-Defense Theory and Its Critics," Security Study 4, no.4 (Summer 1995): 676. Samuel Huntington, who argues against distinguishing between offensive and defensive weapons, also agrees that "some forms of military capability may be more useful for offensive strategies and other forms for defensive ones." Samuel P. Huntington, "U.S. Defense Strategy: The Strategic Innovation of the Reagan Years," in Joseph Kruzel, ed., American Defense Annual: 1987-1988 (Lexington, Mass.; Lexington Books, 1987), 36.

[41]Jack S. Levy, "The Offensive/Defensive Balance of Military Technology: A Theoretical and Historical Analysis," International Studies Quarterly 28, no.2 (June 1984): 219-238.

[42]Robert Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma," World Politics 30, no.2 (January 1978): 202-203.

were key weapons in the German blitzkrieg offense, but tanks provided the best means for defense by cutting off or injuring the attacking forces. Thus, with modern technology it is difficult to distinguish between offensive and defensive weapons.[43]

This study recognizes that both the intrinsic characteristics of weapons and proven tactical doctrines determine their use,[44] but modern weapons are determined more by a country's policy than by their technical characteristics.[45] This study includes all weapons in measuring a country's offensive capability. Offensive capability is expressed as a quantitative measurement.

Coercive Pressure. The degree of a strong power's coercive pressure is closely related to the types of coercive diplomacy it uses.[46] It can try to persuade the opponent to stop short of its goal, to undo its action, or make changes in its government. The heavier the demand on the opponent, the more difficult the task of coercive diplomacy becomes.[47]

Support from Stronger Powers. In this study, support from a stronger power means the defensive support from another state in some combination of military,

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[43]Mearsheimer, Conventional Deterrence, 25-26, and Huntington, "U.S. Defense Strategy," 36. For offensive and defensive characters of a weapon see also M.W. Boggs, "Attempts to Define and Limit 'Aggressive' Armament in Diplomacy and Strategy," University of Missouri Studies 16, no.1 (Columbia: Missouri, 1941), 84-85; Levy, "The Offensive/Defensive Balance of Military Technology," 225; George H. Quester, Offense and Defense in the International System (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1988), 1-12.

[44]Levy, "The Offensive/ Defensive Balance of Military Technology," 226.

[45]Colins S. Gray, Weapons Don't Make War: Policy, Strategy, and Military Technology (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 29 and 31, notes as follows: "Tactical context and operational purpose determines whether a weapon is used offensively, defensively, or indeed in both ways simultaneously. Tactically viewed, there is no valid distinction to be drawn between weapons on the basis of their allegedly offensive or defensive properties... [Thus,] weapons in the hands of a satisfied state or coalition have a strategic meaning different from weapons in the hands of a revolutionary, 'super-rouge,' or even 'crazy' states."

[46]George and Simons, Limits of Coercive Diplomacy, 8-9.

[47]Ibid., 8.

economic, or political assistance.[48] The willingness of strong states to incur the cost of protecting weaker states depends on the potential benefits. The weak state's value to the stronger state can be categorized as: vital, critical, or peripheral interest.[49] The examination of economic and national interests between a defender and protégé can be used to estimate the strong power's resolve to defend its protégé in the event of crisis.

Domestic Power Structure. Domestic power structure refers to the chief executive, the decision-making group surrounding him, and the competing interest groups that support him. Militaristic groups are decision-making units with explicit preferences for crisis as the favored option for settling disputes. [50]

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[48]Paul, Asymmetric Conflicts, 21.

[49] " Vital interest is one that, if lost, directly damages the security of the strong state. Critical interest is one that, if lost, would create a direct threat to one of strong state's vital interest. Peripheral interest is on that, if taken by a hostile power, could only distantly threaten a vital or critical interest." Richard Nixon, Seize the Moment: America's Challenge in a One-Superpower World, (New York: Simon& Schuster, 1992), 36-37.

[50]Paul, Asymmetric Conflicts, 21.

III. THEORIES OF THE BEHAVIOR OF WEAKER STATES

Both the balance of power and deterrence theories aid in understanding the behaviors of weak states. This understanding is also necessary because the policies of the United States and South Korea against North Korea are deterrent in nature. The balance of power and deterrence theories have a number of features in common. Many of the concepts of deterrence theory (for example, commitments and how to reinforce them, signaling, calculating opposing forces, using the fear of escalation, and the mutual assumption of rationality) were implicitly part of the diplomatic practices of the balance-of-power system, without being expressed in specific terminology. [51] The main object of diplomacy is to protect and reinforce deterrence. The balance of power and deterrence theories are complementary. Balance of power theory is useful in explaining foreign policy behavior caused by systemic changes, while deterrent theory is required to analyze decision-making processes.

The first section of this chapter examines the main arguments of balance of power and power transition theory in explaining a weaker state's reaction in a time of crisis. Both theories assume that a balance or preponderance of power preserves peace, because a weaker state would not anticipate being the victim of any crisis it initiated. The second section discusses deterrence theory, which states that superior military power is a sufficient condition for deterrence, but does not explain how a weaker state can initiate a crisis.

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[51]George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1974), 14.

A. BALANCE OF POWER THEORY

Although the term "balance of power" is widely used to explain the behaviors of states in the international system, there seems to be no agreement on its precise meaning. Some writers equate the term with peace, others with war.[52] Opposite interpretations come from the two main groups of structural theories, the balance of power theory and the power transition theory.[53]

The balance of power theory suggests that equality of power is conducive to peace, and an imbalance of power leads to war.[54] On the other hand, the power transition theory suggests that peace is preserved best when there is an imbalance of national capabilities between disadvantaged and advantaged nations.[55] While the two theories are not complementary, both consider power to be the means by which political aims and national interests are driven .[56]

1. Behavior of Weaker States in Balance of Power Theory

The balance of power theory is based on the following assumptions. First, nation-states are the constituent units of the international system. Their interactions form the structure of international political systems, and they are the key units of analysis. Second, anarchy, rather than order and principle, govern the international political system. Finally, other than a fierce motive for survival, the aims of states may vary endlessly.

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[52]Ernst B. Haas, "The Balance of Power: Prescription, Concept, of Propaganda?," World Politics 5, no.4 (July 1953): 442-477. Haas classifies eight different meanings of the balance power and the intentions of its users.

[53]Arquilla, in Dubious Battles: Aggression, Defeat, and the International System (Washington, D.C.: Crane Russak, 1992), 20, depicts the major existing structual theories of the international system.

[54]A. F. K. Organski and Jacek Kugler, The War Ledger (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press,1994), 15.

[55]Ibid., 19.

[56]Arquilla, Dubious Battles, 20.

They may range from an ambition to conquer the world to a desire merely to be left alone. Nevertheless, survival is the top priority for any state.[57]

The main expectations drawn from these assumptions are that states will engage in balancing behavior, and that some sort of equity is achieved as the states pursue security in an anarchic world. Peace is the by-product of this balance. States usually resist hegemonic power, and rarely "bandwagon," or align with strong states.[58] The way to ensure each state's security is to prevent the emergence of any preponderant state.

There are two means of balancing power: internally by increasing economic and military capabilities, or developing clever strategies, and externally through alliances with other nations.[59] In forming alliances, *it is natural for secondary states to flock to the weaker side; for it is the stronger side that threatens them.* They are safer on the weaker side, because the coalition they join gains enough strength to dissuade adversaries from attacking it.[60]

In summary, "power parity" prevents aggression since no state could expect victory in such a situation. Balance of power theory asserts that "parity preserves peace," based on the idea that an aggressor will not engage in a war if it perceives that its power (or the power of its coalition) is less than that of the opponent.[61]

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[57]Kenneth N. Waltz, Theory of International Politics (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1979), 88-95.

[58]Waltz, Theory of International Politics, 126; also see Stephen M. Walt, The Origins of Alliances (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987), 21-26, 263-266. According to Walt, states are likely to balance against threat identified by aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power, and aggressive intentions, while balance of power theory predicts that states will respond to imbalances of power.

[59]Waltz, Theory of International Politics, 118; Walt, Origins of Alliances, 263

[60]Waltz, Theory of Internatonal Politics, 127.

[61]Paul, Asymmetric Conflicts, 5.

2. Power Transition Theories

The opposite hypothesis to "parity preserves peace" is "preponderance deters war."[62] Power transition theory is different from balance of power theory as regards the creation of peace in the international system. Arquilla notes that:

> Transitional theories do admit the lack of an enforceable international law; but they also suggest that the power of the leading state in the system is sufficient to provide for some good type of governance. The leader furnishes certain 'public goods' (e.g., freedom of seas, trade openness) and maintains the system's existing politico-military status quo, implicitly under writing international systemic functions (or regimes) with its own security guarantee.[63]

Power transition theory states that nations initiate war due to a general dissatifaction with their position in the international system.[64] Peace does not exist when states have approximately equal power. The theory assumes that it would be foolish for a weaker state to attempt to battle with a stronger one who could do it great military and economic harm.[65] Thus, "peace is maintained when satisfied great powers are in preponderance, while war is more likely when dissatisfied challengers begin to approximate their capabilities with the preponderant power." [66]

Some scholars apply the "preponderance deters war" hypothesis to regional sub-systems where the superiority of status quo powers did help to prevent war initiation by

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[62]The power transition theory recognizes war initiation by a weaker state. The theory predicts that rising powers may initiate war against and transcend the dominant power. However, rising powers prematurely indulge in war to accelerate the passage. Organski and Kugler, The War Ledger (1980). Thus, power transition theory does not account for conflict initiation by a weaker state that has less than half the power of its opponent.

[63]Arquilla, Dubious Battles, 23.

[64]Organski and Kugler, The War Ledger, 23.

[65]A. F. K. Organski, World Politics (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 293.

[66]Paul, Asymmetric Conflicts, 6.

weak states.[67] Many national leaders emulate the policy of "peace through strength" without question.[68]

The preponderence hypothesis of transition theories does not account for the aggressive challenges initiated by weak states. The power transition theory also does not specify the types of preponderance (i.e., offensive, defensive, or deterrent) that may prevent weaker powers from initiating asymmetric conflicts.[69] Moreover, in a number of cases mentioned in the previous chapter, the overall power capability of a defender was not a deterring factor.

In summary, balance of power and power transition theories explain the rationale behind conflict engagement by strong states, but they cannot fully account for offensive challenges by weak states. Weak states are assumed to behave passively because they cannot affect the structure of the international system, and because they can rarely create their own opportunities.[70]

In reality, small states can maneuver freely in the system. For example, South Korea used its "Nordpolitik" to open formal diplomatic relations with former enemies, China, Russia, and other Eastern European countries, and to gain diplomatic and political predominance over North Korea. In September 1990, North Korea warned the former Soviet Union that it would commence a nuclear development program if Moscow further

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[67]Erich Weede, "Overwhelming Preponderance as a Pacifying Condition among Contiguous Asian Dyads, 1950-69," Journal of Conflict Resolution 20, no.3 (September 1976): 395-411.

[68]Paul, Asymmetric Conflicts, 6.

[69]Ibid., 7.

[70]Robert L. Rothstein, Alliances and Small Powers (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 182; Rothstein, The Weak in the World of the Strong (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 12 and 42, argues as follows: Great Powers have determined their own interests. They have sought to ensure the survival of the international systems that reflect their values and capabilities, while all small states are consumers, and not producers, of security. See also Hans J. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1985), 196.

improved ties to Seoul, and that it would recognize Japan's claims to four northern islands occupied by the Soviet Union.[71] Thus, one should not take it for granted that all small states in the world political system are passive.

B. DETERRENCE THEORY

Deterrence theory also provides some understanding of the rationale of conflict initiation, but there are difficulties in employing the theory on a policy level. Deterrence theory mainly focuses on military threats, and gives little attention to political or diplomatic challenges. It generally assumes that a state will not initiate a war that it foresees losing, and it regards the defender's possession of superior military capability as a sufficient deterrent. But the theory does not fully account for challenges by a weaker state for political advantages, not a military victory.

Deterrence, the use of threat to prevent someone from doing something, has been perceived as a relatively straightforward concept.[72] Complications arise, however, when trying to implement deterrence. Therefore, the concept has been defined and conceptualized in many ways.[73]

Deterrence theory has been based on certain assumptions: "(1) the full formulation of one's intent to protect a nation; (2) the acquisition and deployment of capabilities to back up the intent; and (3) the communication of the intent to the potential "aggressor."[74] None of these are simple to achieve. For example, "a major power which

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[71]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 236-237.

[72]Patrick M. Morgan, Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis (Beverly Hills: Sage Publlications, 1977), 17.

[73]Ibid., 17-46.

[74]George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, 64.

takes on the role of protector of allies, as the United States has done, may frequently be deterring a threat which does not exist" because "the absence of attack could mean either that no attack was ever intended or that deterrence has succeeded."[75]

Deterrence situations can be distinguished in terms of time and the intent of the opponents. Morgan distinguishes between immediate and general deterrence.

> Immediate deterrence concerns the relationship between opposing states where at least one side is seriously considering an attack while the other is mounting a threat of retaliation in order to prevent it. General deterrence relates to opponents who maintain armed forces to regulate their relationship even though neither is anywhere near mounting an attack.[76]

Deterrence can be extended to protect and defend allies from attack rather than to prevent a direct attack on defender's own territory. Paul K. Huth defines extended deterrence as a situation in which the defender threatens military retaliation against the potential attacker in an attempt to prevent the challenger from using military force against an ally of the defender.[77]

Snyder and Diesing distinguish between deterrence based on punishment, which relies on the ability to inflict massive retaliation, and deterrence based on denial, which results from the conventional capability to deny an enemy's goals on the battlefield.[78]

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[75]Ibid., 62.

[76]Morgan, Deterrence, 28.

[77]Extended- immediate deterrence is "a policy in which (a) A potential attacker is actively considering the use of military force against a protégé of the defender; (b) Policy makers in the defender state are aware of this threat; and (c) Recognizing that an attack is possible, policy makers of the defender state, either explicitly or by the movement of military forces, threaten the use of retaliatory force in an attempt to prevent the use of military force by the potential attacker. ... Extended-general deterrence... refers to political and military competition between a potential attacker and defender in which the possibility of an armed conflict over another state is present but the potential attacker is neither actively considering the use of force nor engaging in a confrontation that threatens war." Huth, Extended Deterrence, 16.

[78]Glenn H. Snyder, Deterrence and Defense: Toward A Theory of National Security (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 14-15.

Deterrence by punishment acts on the aggressor's estimate of possible costs, and deterrence by denial deters an opponent's estimate of the probability of gaining his objective.[79]

Deterrence theory, however, is difficult to apply because it views a nation as if it were a single decision-maker who perceives the situation as an individual would, constructs his payoffs, and selects a strategy that is expected to be of maximum utility.[80] In fact, a decision made by a state is the product of a complicated political process and the maneuverings of many self-serving decision-makers.[81] In regard to policy implications, it is important to keep in mind the fact that "one must deter not an opponent 'nation' or 'player' but rather at least a majority of the relevant individuals, groups, and/or institutions in decision-making circles within that nation."[82]

The theory also assumes perfect rationality in decision-making and considers the decision-makers as value maximizers who initiate aggressive challenge only if its benefits exceed costs. Thus, deterrence theory pays a great amount of attention to the balance of military forces between the defender and the potential attacker. It is generally assumed that a state will not launch a war that it anticipates losing, and superior military capability is sufficient for successful deterrence.[83] Although deterrence success is not systematically associated with the overall strategic military balance, Paul K. Huth finds that, in extended

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[79]Ibid.,15.

[80]George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, 282.

[81]Graham Allison has particularly emphasized the role of bureaucratic politics and organizational process in foreign policy decision-making. Graham T. Allison, Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), 67-100, 144-184.

[82]George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, 72.

[83]Jack S. Levy, "Review Article: When Do Deterrent Threats Work?" British Journal of Political Science 18, no.4 (October 1988): 485-512.

deterrence, it is closely associated with "immediate and short-term local military balance" between the defender and the potential attacker.[84] However, the concept of rationality is vague, and there is no commonly accepted standard to measure the value of a disputed interest.[85] Thus, a weak but highly motivated state which values the disputed interest much more than the defender will be inclined to initiate a challenge.

Deterrence theory mainly focuses on military threat.[86] Diplomatic or political challenge have not been carefully distinguished from military attacks, or their special features identified. Instead, the theory assumes that policies that are potent enough to deter military attack would certainly be potent enough to deter lesser threats. No credible deterrence is offered for anything less than limited war, and yet the threat of conflict predominates.[87]

Policymakers often consider the deterrence of threats a matter of deploying military capabilities and implicitly or explicitly threatening their use.[88] Stephen Maxwell stated that "the weakness of these versions of commitment is that they reduce a complex

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[84]Huth, Extended Deterrence, 41; also see Huth, "What Makes Deterrence Work?: Cases from 1900-1980," World Politics 36, no.4 (July 1984): 496-526.

[85]Stephen Maxwell, Rationality in Deterrence, Adelphipapers, no.50 (London: IISS, August 1968), 3.

[86]George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, 38-45. Classify level of deterrence into three kinds; deterrence of nuclear strategic war, deterrence of conventional limited war, and deterrence of crisis and crisis diplomacy. Some scholars use the term "deterrence" in more limited way. They use deterrence as using a military threat in order to prevent military action.; Deterrence is "a policy that seeks to persuade an adversary, through the threat of military retaliation, that the costs of using military force to resolve political conflict will outweigh the benefits." Paul K. Huth, Extended Deterrence and the Prevention of War (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 15; "The most pervasive notion [in strategy today] is that of 'deterrence' that the primary function of military force should be prevent the use of military force by one's opponents." Morton Halperin, Defense Strategies for the Seventies, 2nd edition (Boston: Little Brown, 1971), 10. Quoted in Morgan, 20.; T. V. Paul also uses deterrence in the same way. These definitions on conceptualizations of deterrence, however, exclude other kinds of pressures, e.g. economic sanction, aid cutoffs, or breaking diplomatic relations.

[87]George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, 44, 78-79

[88]Ibid., 45.

political fact to a military or diplomatic process." [89] Lebow and Stein argued that, in many historical cases, credible commitment has been challenged by attackers while many vulnerable commitments have not been challenged.[90] Therefore, even a strong deterrence posture may not deter a weaker challenger who seeks political, not military, victory with strategies such as fait accompli, limited probe, and controlled pressure.[91]

Korea is a good example of the evolution of the deterrence concept in terms of signaling a commitment. It has been widely acknowledged that, during the Korean war in 1950, North Korea felt free to attack because, in previous declarations by Dean Acheson, the U.S. seemed to exclude South Korea from the list of nations which it was committed to defend.[92] The U.S. exercised extended-immediate deterrence against the Chinese invasion into Korea. When the Korean War ended in 1953, the United States stationed forces in South Korea, extending a general deterrence threat toward North Korea. Until recently, the United States and South Korea have kept North Korea's war intentions at bay. U.S. deterrence posture, however, has failed to deter North Korea's political challenges, including the Pueblo incident, the shooting down of EC-121 aircraft, and the ax-slaying incident at Panmunjom.

Deterrence theory does not give enough attention to the influence of time pressure on decision-making. "Time pressure can easily increase the stress on decision-makers and thus degrade their capacity for processing information and exercising calm judgment."[93]

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[89]Maxwell, "Rationality in Deterrence," 18.

[90]Lebow and Stein, "Beyond Deterrence" Journal of Social Issues 43, no.4 (1987): 5-7; Between Peace and War, 58-61.

[91]George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, 534-548.

[92]Ibid., 65.

[93]George, Avoiding War, 37.

Thus, "decision-makers who experience time pressure may view an opponent's deterrence policy as offensive and aggressive and may therefore resort to aims in order to prevent such presumed aggression that could occur in the future."[94]

Despite wide implications in policy areas, deterrence both in theory and practice has fundamental shortcomings when applied to crisis management. A broader theory is needed to encompass deterrence as one of a number of means that can be employed to influence and control the conflict potential in interstate relations. Policy-makers need to use a flexible, discriminating variety of means for influencing adversaries and avoiding conflict. Moreover, deterrence should be considered part of a broader, multifaceted influence process, not a self-contained strategy.[95]

C. SUMMARY

Neither structural nor deterrence theories can account for or predict a weak state's initiation of crises against stronger states. While structural theories can partly explain why strong states engage in international conflict, they rarely explain the aggressive challenges of small states toward stronger states. The balance of power theory and the power transition theory predict that a weaker state should not initiate major inter-state conflicts.[96] However, history shows that weaker states do engage in conflict based on their own calculations against more powerful opponents.

Deterrence theory narrowly focuses on predictions about "the defender's capability for denial and credibility of threat for punishment purposes."[97] Deterrence in

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[94]Paul, Asymmetric Conflict, 9.

[95]George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, 591.

[96]Paul, Asymmeric Conflict, 6.

[97]Ibid., 9.

crisis management, however, is much more complicated, because violence is concealed, making denial strategy and the threat of punishment difficult to apply effectively. Moreover, "asymmetry of motivation favoring the initiator can sometimes compensate for asymmetry of power favoring the defender."[98] Therefore, a weaker challenger may not be deterred when the defending power is exclusively concerned with major attacks.[99]

Both the deterrence and balance of power theories consider only the decision level and systemic level of a crisis. This study presents an alternative theory that encompasses the decision, systemic, and organizational levels.[100] In the next chapter, this theory is used to argue that a weaker state can initiate a offensive challenge against much stronger states not so much for military victory as for political advantage.

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[98]Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, "Deterrence and Foreign Policy," World Politics 41, no.2 (January 1989): 172(footnote 7).

[99]Paul, Asymmetric Conflicts, 8-9.

[100]These three level of analyses are what Waltz refers to as the three images of international relations: the nature and behavior of men, the internal characteristics of the state, and the state system. Kenneth Waltz, Man, the State and War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 12-16. Patrick James, Crisis and War, 153, also suggests that "systemic, state and individual orientations should be linked more closely in future investigation of crisis and war."

IV. POLITICAL CHALLENGE BY WEAKER STATES: ALTERNATIVE ANALYSIS

The previous chapter shows the inability of structural and deterrence theories to explain the rationale of a weaker state's political challenge. This challenge could be the result of a rational choice by leaders who expect to gain from it, fluctuation in the distribution of power in the international system, or political unrest within the weaker state. These explanations are complementary, not exclusive. T. V. Paul analyzed the issue of asymmetric conflicts in international relations systematically by including all three levels of analysis. He draws theoretical arguments from the literature on strategy, arms races, alliances, and domestic politics to provide a plausible explanation for war initiation by weaker states against strong states. Next, he deduced four different variables that he considered to be important to asymmetric war initiation by weaker states: political-military strategy, possession of offensive weapon systems, foreign power support, and changing domestic power structure.[101] Time pressure is the intervening variable that links these four factors to war initiation. Paul argues that "the weaker challenger can initiate war against the relatively strong adversary if its key decision-makers believe that they can achieve their political and military objectives through the employment of a limited aims/fait accompli strategy."[102] This study builds on Paul's approach to asymmetric conflicts.

While Paul's main concern is war initiation by weak states, this study focuses on political challenges by weak states, which is another important aspect of asymmetric conflicts, but does not receive much attention in Paul's study. Paul notes that:

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[101]Paul, Asymmetric Conflicts, 20.

[102]Ibid., 35.

> Although it is not the focus of this study, a number of brinkmanship [one type of political challenge in this study] behavior during the Persian Gulf Crisis of 1990-91 is such a case. The Iraqi regime's annexation of Kuwait in August 1990 and its unwillingness to defuse the crisis by withdrawing from the occupied nation led to a military disastrous situation vis-à-vis a superior US-led coalition. The ensuing military confrontation virtually threatened the very survival of the Iraqi state, suggesting that a weaker nation even under threat of annihilation need not bow down to the enormous military power arrayed against it.[103]

This study suggests some modest changes to Paul's theory. The first is to develop a more flexible political-military strategy that takes into account a challenger's desire for diplomatic, political, and economic advantage. The second change is take a different view of the role of offensive weapons in crisis initiation. Paul sees that a weaker state's short-term offensive advantage provides it with incentive to initiate war against a stronger adversary. This study regards a weaker state's offensive capability as a means of deterring stronger states, not a means of direct attack. The third amendment to the original theory is to add one more variable: coercive pressure from the stronger adversary, which may cause an escalation of a crisis due to the reactionary behavior of weaker states.

This chapter is composed of two main sections. The first explains some of the assumptions made regarding asymmetric conflicts, while the second develops working hypotheses to be tested in Chapter VI.

A. ASSUMPTIONS

This study assumes that decision-makers make cost/benefit calculations prior to initiating a political challenge. This is consistent with the "instrumentalist" conception of rationality: A rational actor chooses the best strategy from a set of options in order to

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[103]Ibid., 4.

attain the goals he has defined.[104] The rationality of a given course of action in a decision-making situation is not absolute. A course of action is rational relative to a possessed body of information that can be rationally evaluated.[105]

This study assumes that a decision to initiate a political challenge is made by decision-making groups with particular external and internal motives when they perceive favorable conditions. In a decision-making unit, the leader has definitive authority over a final decision, but his decision is influenced by the power groups that surround him.[106]

This study assumes the existence of at least four conditions prior to political challenge by a weak state: (1) the presence of serious conflicts of interests, (2) the issue in dispute is valued higher by the weaker side, (3) the weaker side is dissatisfied with the status quo, and (4) the weaker side fears a future deterioration of, or no change in, the status quo."[107] Among these four conditions, the relative value of the issue in dispute is an especially important factor in "crisis bargaining." Two general factors, "the parties' relative military strengths and their interests engaged in the conflict," determine the resolve of each party and its degree of motivation to stand firm.[108]

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[104]The alternate "proceduralist" conception of rationality, is that "an actor after properly defining his goals and considering all his alternatives chooses the best one in which psychological and non-logical influences are ignored. The decision would correspond to what an objective observer would consider as the best method to gain the best value pursued." Frank C. Zagare, The Dynamic of Deterrence (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 8-10; Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing, Conflict among Nations, 341. notes that in the instrumentalist view, a rational decision does not necessarily have to be as perfect or as omniscient as the proceduralist view of it entails. Quoted from Paul, Asymmetric Conflicts, 183, footnote.

[105]Ellery Eells, Rational Decision and Causality (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 5.

[106]This assumption is somewhat similar to that of the "expected utility theory" developed by Bruce Bueno de Mesquita. He assumes that "decision-making regarding war is dominated by a single leader who, acting as gatekeeper, may veto policies intended to start a war." Although final authority rests with him, "his decisions are influenced by the advice and pressures to which he is subjected by a variety of interests." See Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, The War Trap (New Heaven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), 20 and 40.

[107]Paul, Asymmetric Conflicts, 16.

[108]Snyder and Diesing, Conflict Among Nations, 190.

In a bargaining situation, a weak state that demonstrates an irrevocable commitment can squeeze the range of indeterminacy down to the point most favorable to it.[109] A weak state is more likely to behave in a volatile manner, particularly when the rules of regularity and responsibility favor the stronger state[110]. Therefore, during the bargaining process in crisis, "the military inferiority of one party (the weaker state) may be compensated by its greater interests engaged, thus making the parties equally resolved."[111]

Status quo powers, however, are usually unwilling to yield major concessions especially to weaker challengers due to two factors. First, "such powers tend to develop confidence in their military and political advantages and can believe that the weaker side will behave irrationally" if it engages in a conflict that it expects to lose. Second, they may be afraid that such concessions can be viewed as a sign of weakness by adversaries.[112]

Another important factor in crisis bargaining is time pressure on the decision-makers in the weak state. There are three effects of time on bargaining. First, weak states

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[109]Thomas C. Schelling, The Strategy of Conflict (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1994), 24; Schelling also notes a possible theory for the weak challenging the strong, "the rational use of irrationality."

> Even among the emotionally unbalanced, among the certified "irrationals", there is often observed an intuitive appreciation of the principles of strategy, or at least particular applications of them... A careless or even self-destructive attitude... can be a genuine strategic advantage; so can... a reputation for frequent lapses of self-control that make punitive threats ineffectual as deterrents. (Ibid., 17.)

[110]In a negotiation between a weaker state and a strong state, the former "can also escalate demands rather than making concessions, in a tactic that would be seen as bullying and nonnegotiatory if practiced by the strong. In fact, it is usually in weak parties' interests not to make concessions at all until they have been convinced of the good faith of a stronger party through initial concessions." Quoted in I. William Zartman and Maureen R. Berman, The Practical Negotiator (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), 205-206.

[111]Snyder and Diesing, Conflict Among Nations, 190.

[112]Paul, Asymmetric Conflict, 17

may discount future benefits on the basis that they should be enjoyed now rather than later. Second, the value of an agreement may change as time goes by. Third, bargaining costs can escalate with each time period, resulting in an increase in the total costs over time.[113] This bargaining logic may be applied to a weaker state's political challenge in an attempt to bargain by sharing the risk of crisis.

On the basis of these assumptions, this study hypothesizes the relationship between weaker states' political challenge and the five independent variables. In the first section, the strategic calculations of weaker states are hypothesized to find causal relations with their political challenges. Subsequent sections hypothesize relationships between these political challenge and changes in short term offensive capability, domestic power structures, foreign support, and coercive pressure from the stronger states.

B. VARIABLES AND HYPOTHESES

1. Political-Military Strategy in Political Challenges

This section examines the typical strategies for weak states that initiate political challenge. The main political-military strategy is usually limited aims/fait accompli, which is accomplished with the additional strategies of controlled pressure and brinkmanship.[114]

In military terms, limited aims refers to capturing a segment of enemy territory, an act that is not as serious as the decisive defeat and surrender of the enemy.[115] The objective of a limited aims strategy is to create a political or military fait accompli that may not be reversed by the outcome of a war.[116] Under a limited aims/fait accompli

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[113]Ibid., 18.

[114]For various offensive crisis management strategies, see George, Avoiding War, 379-383.

[115]John J. Mearsheimer, Conventional Deterrence, (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1983), 53-56.

[116]Paul, Asymmetric Conflicts, 21.

strategy, the initiator of a political challenge is interested only in the attainment of some political objective. The weak state's degree of belief in the success of this strategy can be measured by surveying the extent of consensus among the decision-making groups.

Controlled pressure is used by a weak state when it believes that the defender's commitment is unequivocal but soft. A weak state may initiate a political challenge to alter the status quo by using low-level options that it believes may erode or bypass the defender's commitment.[117] The initiator carefully applies "pressure that attempts either (a) to convince the defender that he will have great difficulty and incur unacceptable risks if he attempts to honor his commitment; or (b) erode the defender's commitment to the weak ally by undermining the ally's confidence in his defender's ability and willingness to honor fully its commitment."[118]

Controlled pressure may be applied by various non-military encroachments, such as warnings that the defender's response to such a minor provocation will trigger uncontrollable escalation. This strategy is very attractive, because the situation favors the challenger and handicaps the defender.[119] Tactics employed by an initiator of controlled pressure include diplomatic blackmail and piecemeal restrictions of the defender's rights with treaties signed between two parties.[120] The strong state (defender) who confronts controlled pressure by a weaker state often finds itself facing a dilemma. As George notes,

> The defender's dilemma is accentuated insofar as the challenger has carefully refrained from initiating any military hostilities and engages only in a variety of nonmilitary encroachments... The defender is faced with the onerous decision of whether, when, where, and how to initiate use of

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[117]George, Avoiding War, 381.

[118]George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, 544.

[119]George, Avoiding War, 382.

[120]George and Smoke, Deterrence in American Foreign Policy, 545.

limited force himself in order to put an end to the nonmilitary encroachments.[121]

Brinkmanship is the deliberate creation of a shared risk that an adversary cannot tolerate, thus forcing his accommodation, or deterring him by showing that his contrary move may disturb us so that we slip over the brink whether we want to or not, carrying him with us.[122] In a brinkmanship crisis, the initiator is not trying to start a war, as in a justification for hostility, "but rather aims to achieve specific political objectives by employing threats of force. Brinkmanship succeeds only if the initiator achieves his goal without provoking war."[123]

There are three generic goals of brinkmanship.[124] The immediate objective is to challenge an important commitment of an adversary, from which the challenger expects to derive economic, or strategic reward. Second, "brinkmanship can also aim at forcing a trade-off. Here the immediate objective of challenging a commitment is only instrumental in securing the real goal of a concession elsewhere. By demonstrating the ability to challenge successfully an adversary's commitments the initiator expects to receive a quid pro quo for subsequent restraint." The initiator of a brinkmanship crisis, whose real objective is trade-off, attempts to link the resolution of crisis to the satisfactory resolution of other issues or conflicts. Finally, the brinkmanship initiator's objective can be to humiliate his opponent by demonstrating his relative weakness to the world. All of

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[121]The strategy of controlled pressure was employed by Gamal Abdel Nasser in nationalizing the Suez canal company in the Suez Crisis of 1956, and also by Soviet Union on her exploitation in the Berlin crises of 1948-1949, 1958-1959, and 1961. George, Avoiding War, 382.

[122]Schelling, Strategy of Conflict, 200.

[123]Lebow, Between Peace and War, 57-58.

[124]Ibid., 58-60.

these goals are not mutually exclusive. For example, the humiliation of an adversary can be pursued with the aim of trade-off or simple negation of a commitment.[125]

The main argument for political challenge by weak states stems from the three strategies: the main strategy of limited aims/fait accompli, which is augmented by the two tactical strategies of controlled pressure and brinkmanship.

Hypothesis 1: The possibility of political challenge is high if a weaker state's decision-maker believes in the efficacy of a successful limited aims/fait accompli strategy.

Controlled pressure or brinkmanship strategy may be employed to create a political fait accompli situation in order to preserve limited gains until a crisis can be calmed down. In pursuing these strategies, the most likely objective of a weaker state is to draw the stronger opponent into negotiations. Without negotiations, an international conflict tends to escalate into a conflict that would undoubtedly do great damage to the small nation. Therefore, it is in the weaker state's interest to exploit any opportunity to enter into a dialogue with its stronger adversary.[126] A victory measured in military terms cannot describe all the tangible and intangible strategic objectives an initiator may have gained, because political challenge succeeds only if the initiator achieves his goals without escalating the crisis into war.

The initiator generally believes that he can control a crisis and calculate the result. Such expectations can come from a belief that the strong power would neither escalate the

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[125]Ibid., 60.

[126]Cohen, Small Nations in Times of Crisis and Confrontations, 336.

crisis into a war, nor fight with all its resources.[127] This limitation could be due to "technical constraints, third party pressures, or moral restrictions."[128]

Although weak states cannot defeat strong states on the battlefield, they can achieve a victory by destroying a strong power's political capability to engage in a crisis.[129] Especially in extended deterrence, a weak state may believe that public opinion in the stronger state would oppose sending troops to a conflict that is of relatively little threat value.[130] Moreover, the long-term capability of a stronger state rarely influences the strategic calculations of an initiator who expects to employ a limited aims strategy in a crisis.[131]

The three strategies mentioned above may also be employed by strong states against weaker states. However, the contention here is that those strategies are more viable for weak states, because a stronger power can choose from many other strategies such as coercive diplomacy or economic/diplomatic sanctions.

2. Possession of Offensive or Deterrent Weapon Systems

A relatively strong offensive or deterrent capability is an important advantage to a weaker state. Stanley Hoffmann argues that, if the smaller states are confident in their defenses against threats from strong powers, they are often "able and willing to pursue

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[127]Paul, Asymmetric Conflict, 28.

[128]Ibid, 28.

[129]Andrew J. R. Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict," World Politics 27, no.2 (January 1975): 175-200.

[130]Eliot A. Cohen, "Constraints on America's Conduct of Small Wars," International Security 9, no.2 (Fall 1984), 151-81.

[131]Huth, Extended Deterrence, 41, notes that short-term, immediate local balance of power is more important than the long-term balance of military power.

goals beyond mere survival and security."[132] The possibility of political challenge is high if the weaker state has a strong military capability. While a weaker state cannot defeat a stronger one in military terms, it may dissuade the stronger state from using military power.

The goal of a weak state is not so much total victory as to "deter or evade war, to survive, or to inflict costly damage on the attacker."[133] Successful deterrence needs at least two conditions: a country should have considerable military strength and readiness to fight for its interests. If it is accepted that the weak state will eventually lose the battle, how can it deter the stronger power? The secret of deterrence through punishment lies in the weak state's ability to exert such a high price from the stronger power that victory becomes too costly.[134] Therefore it is rational for a weak state to maintain a force large enough to deter a possible attack.[135] Even under unfavorable conditions, it would be judicious for a weak state to fight back in order to impose such heavy damage on the attacking state that the attack would prove to be unprofitable.[136]

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[132]Stanley Hoffmann, Gulliver's Troubles (New York: MacGraw Hill, 1968), 39; quoted in Handel, Weak States in the International System, 196. Both Jervis and Quester also argue that offensive superiority increases the likelihood of war. See Jervis, Cooperation under the Security Dilemma, 188-190; Quester, Offense and Defense in the International System, 7, 208. However, Jack S. Levy, The Offensive/Defensive Balance of Military Technology, 222, argues that decision-makers' perceptions of offensive/defensive balance intensifies worst-case analysis and increases incentives for preemption.

[133]Handel, Weak States in the International System, 104.

[134]Ibid., 94.

[135]Annette Baker Fox, The Power of Small States: Diplomacy in World War II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 184.

[136]Handel, Weak States in the International system, 103. Robert Jervis, The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution: Statecraft and the Prospect of Armageddon (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 11, also notes that "neither now nor in the past do the costs have to be overwhelming in order to deter nations from war. They just have to be high enough to make going to war less attractive than the alternative."

Stronger states have their own limitations in using military power to punish weaker states in such conflicts. "The infliction of punishment is costly for the punisher as well as for the punished, quite apart from any retaliatory action, and the threat of punishment is correspondingly less as its cost increases."[137] Stronger states can lose a large amount of war material, manpower, and even precious time in the process. Even after winning the conflict, they may need to maintain a large number of forces in the occupied territory, forces that could be used elsewhere in more important conflicts.[138]

Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the hands of weaker states also make strong states reluctant to engage in conflict with them. WMD in the hands of stronger states, however, often have not deterred the weaker state from initiating a conflict. Neither Vietnam nor North Korea was deterred by the U.S. nuclear bomb. Argentina was not deterred by the British bomb in the Falkland Islands. However, the greater the WMD capability of the weaker state, the less likely the stronger state is to attack.[139]

One important incentive for developing nuclear weapons is "deterring an attack from a nuclear armed adversary."[140] The possession of even a small nuclear force by a weak state could constrain a stronger nuclear power from threatening it. A defeated state can inflict intolerable damage with a nuclear weapon, even in the last days or hours of a war.[141] Bernard Brodie argues that "prediction is more than the fact" in nuclear threat.

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[137]Boulding, Conflict and Defense, 256.

[138]Handel, Weak States in the International System, 94.

[139]David Vital, The Inequality of States: A Study of the Small States in the International System (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 170-171.

[140]Stephen M. Meyer, Dynamics of Nuclear Proliferation (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago press, 1984), 56.

[141]Quester, Offense and Defense in the International System, 156.

The threat of retaliation does not have to be 100 percent certain. "It is sufficient if there is belief that there is a good chance of it. The prediction is more important than the fact."[142]

Although a weak state cannot develop a serious second-strike capability against a stronger power, the possibility that it might conceal nuclear bombs and their means of delivery cannot be ruled out. The mystique surrounding a small state's offensive system can be a means of deterrence. For example, the uncertainty about the exact status of North Korea's nuclear capability may have constrained U.S. crisis behavior. But openly possessing WMD may encourage small states to use other assets, such as a large conventional Army.[143]

Thus, the second hypothesis supposes that a political challenge by a weaker state is more likely if it has enough offensive or deterrent capability to worry a stronger state.

Hypothesis 2: The possibility of political challenge is high if a weaker state gains sufficient offensive or deterrent capability to inflict significant costs on a strong adversary, thus providing it with bargaining leverage.

Nonetheless, a weaker state may not consider its army, however strong, the only or even the major response to its most immediate political problem. While a small nation's army can further, but not replace, policy, it can, while cultivating its military prowess, develop its diplomatic strategy.[144] The contention is that a relatively strong offensive or

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[142]Quoted in Bernard Brodie, ed., The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1946), 74.

[143]John Arquilla, "Bound to Fail: Regional Deterrence after the Cold War," Comparative Strategy 14, no.2 (1995): 123-136, notes that "if a potential adversary were to obtain WMD capability, then in a regional setting it could engage in conventional aggression buttressed by an escalatory threat."

[144]Cohen, Small Nations in Times of Crisis and Confrontation, 335

deterrent capability may be a necessary condition for a political challenge against a stronger state but it may not be a sufficient condition.

3. Domestic Power Structure

The third variable that is critical to the weak state's calculation of political challenge is changes in its domestic power structure. Changes in decision-making structure can occur as a result of coups, internal power struggles, or changes of regimes through alternation of personnel.[145] The weakness of the initiator's political system, competitions among interest groups for power, and the political vulnerability of a leader have direct impact on that state's foreign policy. "Foreign policy crises tend to increase support for national leaders, at least in the short term. Therefore, leaders may be motivated to direct the public eye away from domestic problems and toward foreign affairs. Such a strategy could be carried out by exploring external conflicts or even manufacturing them."[146]

If a state is politically unstable, leaders attempt to offset discontent at home with diplomatic success abroad.[147] Facing domestic turmoil, they may contemplate diplomatic and political conflict with other states in an effort to restore unity by creating an external menace.[148]

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[145]Paul, Asymmetric Conflicts, 33. Stephen M. Walt, "Revolution and War", World Politics 44, no.3 (April 1992): 321-68, notes that revolutions are a potent cause of instability, because they alter the "balance of threats." They encourage states to exaggerate each other's hostility, further increasing perception of threat.

[146]James, Crisis and War, 15.

[147]Lebow, Between Peace and War, 66. The nature of politics in underdeveloped countries is inherently unstable, and the ruling elites in those states are venerable to revolutionary expectations of the masses. Rothstein, The Weak in the World of the Strong,179-199.

[148]James, Crisis and War, 12. Spanier and Wendzel, Games Nations Play, 220, argues that leaders of the third world countries have used foreign policies to help them "nationalize" their people. "Often the only emotion that united the people was hatred of the former colonial people."

If a regime's legitimacy and popularity are low, diversionary conflicts with an outside threat can be effective means to achieve popular support. Leaders in weak states may also consider the successful removal of external threats as necessary for building internal control and legitimacy.[149] As Robert C. Good argues,

> The state's legitimacy is more easily asserted through its foreign policy than through its domestic policies and it is more apparent when performing on the international than on the national stage. Domestic issues divide the nation and disclose how little developed its consciousness of itself; foreign issues unite the nation and mark it as a going concern.[150]

Brecher argues that "newly installed regimes are more likely to face political, economic instability and worry about their survival, therefore they are more likely to engage in foreign crisis."[151]

Stephen Meyer notes that national leaders may "consider the nuclear option a way to direct domestic energies away from domestic problems." States might also, Meyer argues, pursue developing nuclear weapons as a way to raise the morale of their defense establishments. They could view nuclear weaponry, as a symbol of military power and advanced capability, as a "pain reliever" for a demoralized defense establishment in the

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[149]Michael Mastanduno, David A. Lake, and G. John Ikenberry, "Toward a Realist Theory of State Action," International Studies Quarterly 33, no.4 (December 1989): 457-474, argues as follows: As "an intangible asset of the state, legitimacy is the acceptance on part of domestic groups of the state's claim to the exercise of decision-making authority." In light of their domestic goals, one important international strategy state officials can pursue is external validation that refers to "attempts by state officials to utilize their status as authoritative international representatives of the nation-state to enhance their domestic political positions. For new states (i.e., those that have come to power in the wake of internal revolutions), external validation involves first and foremost the quest for diplomatic recognition. Gaining the recognition of international community appears to be an exceptionally powerful means for a nascent state to establish legitimacy in the eyes of its domestic population."; Kim Jung-Il, the new North Korean leader, eagerly seeks diplomatic recognition from the United States and Japan through the nuclear diplomacy.

[150]Robert C. Good, "State-Building as a Determinant of Foreign Policy in the New States", in Naturalism and Nonalignment, ed. Laurence W. Martain (New York: Holt, Rineheart & Winston, 1962), 8-9. Quoted in Games Nations Play, 222.

[151]Michael Brecher, Crisis in World Politics: Theory and Reality (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1993), 47.

wake of a major military defeat.[152] North Korea may be relevant to both of these conditions. During the 1950s, the North experienced the disastrous Korean War and, since the 1980s, North Korea's economic condition has been devastated in contrast to South Korea. Thus, its peoples' morale has been strained.

Second, competition for power among interest groups can provide another incentive for political challenge. Because a state is a composite of many players and bureaucracies with divergent interests and differing degrees of power, government decisions result from a political process that often produces a result distinctly different from what any one person or group intended.[153]

In the course of unstable internal situations, "military or civilian groups that value the use of force may gain control of a state and the foreign policy decision-making process. They may gain support from other interest groups and pursue militaristic solutions to their dispute with the more powerful adversary.[154] This study infers the political orientation of these groups, through research in similar questions and their political activities prior to assuming power.

Finally, the political vulnerability of a leader can be an incentive for political challenges. "It can encourage leaders to seek political success abroad in order to buttress their position at home."[155] By playing a dramatic and popular role on the international stage, many leaders in weak states have found that confrontational foreign policy

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[152]Meyer, The Dynamics of Nuclear Proliferation, 63-64.

[153]Lebow, Between Peace and War, 70. Allison, Essence of Decision, 145.

[154]Paul, Asymmetric Conflicts, 33. Barry R. Posen, The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1984), 243, also notes that "military organizations generally prefer the offensive."

[155]Lebow, Between Peace and War, 220.

sometimes helped them accomplish their domestic aims to preserve popular support, stay in power, and stabilize the government.[156]

Therefore, the third hypothesis suggests that a study of domestic leadership structures is important to understanding why a weak state initiates political challenges.

Hypothesis 3; The possibility of political challenge is relatively high if the power structure changes in a weak state, and if a militaristic group with little legitimacy assumes control of the decision-making process.

4. Support from Powerful "Third-Party" States

Foreign relationships, such as alliances or geostrategic positions, can provide a weaker state with expectations regarding political and military support in the event of crisis. A weak state engaged in a conflict may seek the protection of a great power to prevent a stronger opponent from escalating a conflict beyond the capabilities of the weaker state.[157] The powerful allies of weaker states can help them with various defensive measures.[158] The most common way for weak states to commit a great power to support their interest is to sign a formal defense treaty with it, or to receive unambiguous promises of support in the case of military attack.[159] The great power,

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[156]Spanier and Wendzel, Games Nations Play, 220-223.

[157]Paul, Asymmetric Conflicts, 31.

[158]In asymmetric conflicts, the great power allies of weaker states are expected to confine themselves to defensive measures such as political and economic support and arms supplies. Paul, 188, footnote. Another way of support is providing intelligence to weaker states. "When weak states are faced with... issues directly involving the great or superpowers, the information available to them is often inferior, so that they find themselves dependent on intelligence supplied them by the powers", Handel, Weak States in the International System, 42-43.

[159]Ibid., 122.

however, does not have to agree to a formal alliance relationship;[160] it may want to leave its commitment somewhat ambiguous to avoid manipulation by the weaker state.[161] Weaker states, however, may still hope for support from the great power ally even with ambiguous signals such as verbal support. Such expectations may become more realistic once an alliance relationship is institutionalized.[162]

Weaker states contemplating a political challenge may take into account the factor of fluctuating alliance commitment. Great power alliance support fluctuates as time goes by, therefore, time pressure can be an important factor in a weak state's calculation of political challenge. Decision-makers in weaker states understand that alliance commitments can change, and that the possibility of success in a conflict may decrease as time passes.[163]

The importance of weaker states to stronger allies somewhat depends on systemic polarity. When the distribution of power between the strong powers is balanced or the system is in tension and there is a state of conflict, "the importance of the weak states rises and the powers are willing to pay a higher price for collaboration and friendship."[164] Thus, weak states in an acute bipolar or multipolar system can expect support from their stronger allies.

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[160]However,the strong power ally of a weaker state may have to send a signal for supporting the weaker state, as China did reveal its intention to veto any UN embargo against North Korea.

[161]Robert Jervis, The Logic of Images in International Relations (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1970) 87-88, notes that "to restrain yet not alienate its allies, a state may want to prevent them from being confident that it will fulfill its obligations... While nations generally want to be known as trustworthy, and deserting an alliance undermines credibility, a nation will lose bargaining leverage if their allies are sure they can count on it to live up to its original commitments to enter and stay in war."

[162]Paul, Asymmetric Conflicts, 31.

[163]Ibid., 32.

[164]Handel, Weak States in the International System, 187.

On the other hand, some weaker states benefit from their strategic locations. For example, Belgium is in the center of the strategic highway between France and Germany. "Its strategic importance for Great Britain led the British to guarantee its independence, though they could not prevent it from being overrun and occupied twice. In the same way, Portugal's strategic importance for the control of the sea lanes to Great Britain has helped it to secure British defense."[165]

Therefore, the fourth hypothesis relates the possibility of alliance support with the likelihood of political challenge by a weaker state.

Hypothesis 4: The possibility of political challenge is high if a weaker state has strong support from a powerful "third-party" state.

5. Coercive Pressure from the Stronger Adversary

> *"... if the only choice was between submission with loss of independence, and danger with the hope of preserving that independence, in such a case it is he who will not accept the risk, that deserves blame, not he who will"*
> *Thucydides, The History of the Peloponnesian War, Book II, Chapter VIII, paragraph 62.*

The intent of a strong power's use of coercive pressure is to "back a demand on an adversary with a threat of punishment for noncompliance that will be credible and potent enough to persuade him that it is in his interest to comply with the demand."[166] The problem with this policy is that the coercer's demand will strengthen the opponent's

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[165]Quoted in Handel, 74. Strategic location is both an asset and a liability but, in wartime, it can endanger the integrity of a weak state. "After all, Germany attacked Belgium and Holland not because of their inherent weakness but because it was at war with France and Great Britain, and the two small countries happened to be located on the strategic highway to France." Ibid., 78.

[166]George and Simon, Limits of Coercive Diplomacy, 2.

motivation to resist. If the strong power "pursues ambitious objectives that go beyond its own vital or important interests, and if it infringes on vital or important interests of the adversary, then the asymmetry of interest and balance of motivation will favor the adversary and make successful application of coercive diplomacy much more difficult."[167]

A strong demand, (e.g., compellence) on a weaker state tends to be more difficult to achieve because it demands more humiliation from the compelled state.[168] Thus, policy makers in weaker states who believe that a situation is intolerable feel strong psychological pressure to conclude that it can be changed. Moreover, a motivated initiator faced with pressing foreign and domestic threats believes that these threats can be overcome only by means of a successful challenge to an adversary's commitment.[169] Thus, George warns that the blackmailer must consider the possibility that his use of this strategy will cause his intended victim to seize the initiative himself and take some forceful action of his own.[170]

Thus, the fifth hypothesis states the possibility of a political challenge by a weak states as a reaction to the coercive pressure of a strong power.

Hypothesis 5: The possibility of political challenge is high if a weaker state believes that the coercive pressure from the stronger state is intolerable and too expensive to accept.

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[167]Ibid., 15.

[168]Ibid., 84.

[169]Robert Jervis, Richard Ned Lebow, and Janice Gross Stein, Psychology and Deterrence (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1989), 212.

[170]George, Avoiding War, 379. See also Robert Axelrod, The Evolution of Cooperation, (A Division of Harper Colins Publishers: Basicbooks, 1984), 183.

C. SUMMARY

A state that is inferior in overall power capabilities, even after assessing its disadvantages vis-à-vis the stronger opponent, can initiate a political challenge if its key decision-makers believe that they can achieve their political-diplomatic objectives through the employment of a limited aims/fait accompli strategy. This choice is made within the realm of rational calculation, and it depends on offensive capability, support from stronger powers, domestic power structure in the weak state, and coercive pressure from the stronger adversary.

The remainder of this study examines the validity of the five hypotheses, as discussed in this chapter, by testing them with the North Korean nuclear crisis. The next chapter surveys the history of the North Korean nuclear program and the dangers as perceived by the United States and its allies.

V. BACKGROUND TO THE CRISIS

This chapter focuses on the evolution of North Korea's nuclear program. The chapter is composed of two main sections. The first surveys the history of the North Korean nuclear weapons program and the manner in which the program has been developed. This historical survey helps lay the groundwork for an understanding of the North's nuclear capability. The second section analyzes the perceived dangers of the North's nuclear program, especially from the American and South Korean points of view.

North Korea has quite a long history of nuclear development. During the formative years of its nuclear program, the North received substantial assistance from the Soviet Union. Within the last 40 years, North Korea's indigenous technological capacity has progressed to the point where it can independently produce weapons grade plutonium. The North's bomb-designing capability is unknown. Its potential nuclear weapons capability, however, is potent enough to threaten the interest of the United States in global nuclear nonproliferation and regional stability. The North Korean nuclear program also endangers South Korea's two key national interests: the possibility of peaceful unification, and growing democracy.

A. EVOLUTION OF NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

This section deals with the history of North Korea's nuclear program since1950, including 1990, the year Pyongyang explicitly revealed its intention to develop nuclear weapons,[171] and 1995 when North Korea played dangerous nuclear brinkmanship. The evolution of North Korea's nuclear program can be divided into four main stages: early

[171] In September, 1990 Pyongyang told Moscow that it would begin its own "nuclear development" if Moscow further improved relations with Seoul. "Moscow, Seoul Link Spurs N. Korea Treat," Washington Times, January 2, 1991.

activity (1950s), indigenous development of nuclear technology (early 1960s to mid 1970s), expansion (late 1970s to 1988), and nuclear diplomacy (since 1988).[172]

1. Early Activity

In 1947, before North Korea was established on September 9, 1948, the Soviet Union surveyed North Korea's uranium-bearing monazite sand.[173] From late 1949 to the outbreak of the Korean War, North Korea exported concentrates of monazite, tantalum, niobium, and uranic ore to the Soviet Union as a portion of its payment for military equipment and arms delivered to Pyongyang in 1949-1950. In 1952, during the Korean War, China also sent Dr. Wang Gaochang to North Korea to search for and collect radioactive materials.[174]

The first indication of North Korea's nuclear related activities occurred in June, 1955 when representatives of the North Korean Academy of Sciences participated in the East European Scientific Conference in Moscow on the peaceful use of nuclear energy.[175] On March 26 and September 7, 1956, the Soviet Union and the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK) signed two agreements on cooperation in nuclear research projects. These agreements included provisions for a limited number of North Korean scientists to receive training at the Dubna Combined Nuclear Institute in the Soviet

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[172]For a history of North Korea's nuclear program see Joseph S. Bermudez Jr, "North Korea's Nuclear Programme," Jane's Intelligence Review 3, no.9 (September 1991): 404-411; Leonard S. Spector, Nuclear Ambitions: The Spread of Nuclear Weapons 1989-1990 (Boulder: West View Press, 1990); Alexandre Y. Mansourov, "The Origins, Evolution, and Current Politics of the North Korean Nuclear Program," The Nonproliferation Review (Spring- Summer 1995): 25-38; Michael J. Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).

[173]Monazite is the principal ore of thorium used as a source of nuclear energy. Mansourov, "Origins of the North Korean Nuclear Program," 25.

[174]Ibid., 25.

[175]Bermudez , "North Korea's Nuclear Programme", 404-411.

Union.[176] In January, 1958, North Korea, with Soviet assistance, established the KPA (Korean People's Army) Atomic Weapons Training Center near Kilchu, in the northeast part of the country.[177]

In 1959, North Korea signed additional protocols for the peaceful use of nuclear energy with both the Soviet Union and People's Republic of China (PRC).[178] These agreements signaled the beginning of a long relationship between these two countries and North Korea in the field of nuclear technology. Since that time, many North Korean scientists, technicians, and KPA officers have traveled to both the USSR and PRC to receive nuclear-related schooling.[179] Moreover, the 1959 North Korea-Soviet Union agreement authorized the transfer of a small research reactor and other facilities to Pyongyang.[180] The agreement also provided for Soviet assistance in the establishment of the Atomic Energy Research Center (AERC) in 1962 with the help of DPRK's Academy of Sciences. The site chosen for North Korea's nuclear research facility was about 90km north of Pyongyang, Youngdong.[181] The nuclear cooperation agreements of 1956 and

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[176]Spector, Nuclear Ambitions, 121.

[177]Joseph S. Bermudez Jr., North Korea's Nuclear Infrastructure", Jane's Intelligence Review 6, no.2 (February 1994): 74-79.

[178]Bermudez, "North Korea's Nuclear Programme", 404-411.

[179]During the 1960s and 1970s, North Korea had a total of 250 researchers trained at the Dubna Institute. It now keeps a total of 2,400 specialists, 150 of whom possess doctoral degrees, and are permanently stationed in the Yongbyon base. Tai-Sung An, "The Rise and Decline of North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program," Korea and World Affairs 16, no.4 (Winter 1992): 675.

[180]Mansourov, "Origins of the North Korean Nuclear Program," 26.

[181]The AERC itself is composed of a number of institutes, including the Nuclear Physics Research Institute, the Nuclear Electronics Institutes, the Isotope Processing Research Institute, and the Radioactive Chemistry Research Institute. The AERC has an estimated scientific staff of 2,000. Although the term 'Yongbyon' is almost universally applied to identify the location of the DPRK's major nuclear research center, it is somewhat inaccurate. The major facilities are not located in Yongbyon itself, but are sited west and southwest of that city along the Kuryong River. Bermudez, "North Korea's Nuclear Infrastructure," 74-79.

1959 also helped North Korea to establish a nuclear physics department and related curriculum at both Kim Il-Sung University and Kim Chaek Industrial College.[182]

2. Indigenous Development of Nuclear Technology

In 1964, North Korea, with the assistance of the PRC, conducted a uranium mining survey of the entire country, and reportedly discovered many commercial uranium deposits in the northeast.[183] In May-June 1965, North Korea received a small 2MWt IRT-2000 research reactor and 0.1MWt critical assembly from the USSR under the 1959 nuclear cooperation agreement.[184] The reactor was set up in a special district, 4.7 kilometers west of Youngdong. The 2MWt research reactor became operational in 1967, and was upgraded to 8MWt using indigenous North Korean technology.[185]

As a result of its new importance, the whole area of Yongbyon was designated as a special district and put directly under the control of the state Administrative Council. Access to the area was so restricted that everyone who entered had to carry a special passport issued by the Ministry of Republic Security.[186]

In September, 1974, North Korea officially joined the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), but did not sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). This was "a move probably calculated to create an image of compliance among members of the international community and magnify world pressure on South Korea to abandon

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[182]Ibid., 74-79.

[183]The reported amount of deposits was four million tons. These reports seem to be exaggerated, however, since reserves of this amount would be larger than those of Australia, South Africa, the U.S. or Canada, countries thought to have some of the world's richest uranium deposits. Spector, Nuclear Ambitions, 121.

[184]Bermudez, "North Korea's Nuclear Programme," 404-411.

[185]Bermudez, "North Korea's Nuclear Infrastructure," 78. Developing an indigenous nuclear program is consistent with the principle of "Juche" (self-reliance) which the North Korea embraces as a doctrine of national development.

[186]Ibid., 74-79.

its own nuclear program," which reportedly began in 1971.[187] Three years later, in July 1977, North Korea signed an INFCIRC/66-type agreement with the IAEA, under which its 2MWt research reactor and 0.1MWt critical assembly have been monitored since.[188] Once again, North Korea hoped to convince South Korea and the world that "it was complying with nonproliferation norms and to paint the South as the nation intent on bringing nuclear weapons to the peninsula."[189] On the other hand, North Korea continued work on its nuclear weapons program.

3. Expansion of Nuclear Program

From the mid-1970s, North Korea showed a dramatic increase of interest in nuclear development, and decided to pursue an indigenous nuclear weapons program.[190] It expanded nuclear-related facilities and developed the infrastructure for a nuclear weapons program in Yongbyon. It also began work on indigenous nuclear reactors, nuclear fuel enrichment technology, and potential nuclear weapons delivery systems.

In April 1975, President Kim Il-Sung made a trip to China to seek some measure of security while North Korea was developing its nuclear capabilities.[191] He asked Chou Enlai's support both in establishing a North Korean nuclear weapon program and in dissuading U.S. nuclear threats against North Korea by placing it under the PRC's nuclear

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[187]Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 29.

[188]INFCIRC/66 is the safeguards system that the IAEA drew up in the mid-1960s before the advent of the NPT. see David Fischer, Towards 1995: the Prospects for Ending the Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, (Brookfield: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1993), 242.

[189]Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 29.

[190]New York Times, October 27, 1991, 26; Bermudez, "North Korea's Nuclear Programme", 404.

[191]Kim Il-Sung's trip to China, the first since 1961, came just after the fall of Phnom Penh, on the verge of South Vietnam debacle and, thus, provoked intense speculation on the purpose of his visit." Chin-O Chung , Pyongyang Between Peking and Moscow (Mobile: University of Alabama Press, 1978), 145-146.

security.[192] Though the PRC did not give everything that Kim Il-Sung requested, it did provide significant assistance, including the expansion of its training of North Korean nuclear scientists and technicians. In March, 1977, the Korean Worker's Party (KWP) secretary, Kang Song-san, visited the PRC's Lop Nur nuclear test and research facility, and attended a reception hosted by the Seventh Machine Industry Ministry, which is responsible for PRC ballistic missile development.[193]

North Korea also constructed an Isotope Processing Facility at Yongbyon with Soviet assistance during early 1970s.[194] There are a total of seven "hot cells" at this facility. Basic research into uranium and plutonium chemistry is reported to have begun in 1975. In the late 1970s, a uranium mine became operational in Pyongsan, 95km southeast of Pyongyang.

According to Ko Young-Hwan, a high-level defector from North Korea, Pyongyang built an underground nuclear research center near the Pakchon area where DPRK nuclear scientists began working on indigenous nuclear fuel enrichment technology, a design for a nuclear device, and potential nuclear weapon delivery systems.[195] In 1980, the DPRK began to construct their first indigenously designed 30MWt gas-graphite reactor at Yongbyon that would cause so much concern throughout the late 1980s and 1990s.[196]

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[192]This was North Korea's other response to the threat of a South Korean bomb in the early 1970s. See Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 28-29.

[193]Bermudez, "North Korea's Nuclear Programme," 408.

[194]This facility was not on the original list of facilities submitted to the IAEA. Its existence was not made known to the IAEA until their inspection of AERC in May 1992. It was here during 1990, that the DPRK was reported to have extracted "gram sized" quantities of plutonium from the "damaged" rods removed from the 30MWt reactor. Bermudez, "North Korea's Nuclear Infrastructure", 79.

[195]Korea Herald, September 14, 1991, 3.

[196]This 30MWt reactor is also claimed to be 5MWe by North Korea. DPRK insists that their indigenously designed nuclear reactors are for electrical generation, and identifies them by their electrical

The year 1982 marked a significant expansion of nuclear-related educational facilities.[197] The Pyongsong Scientific University and the Atomic Energy Research Center were established 28km north of Pyongyang. Also, Kim Il-Sung University and Kim Chaek Industrial college established separate colleges of nuclear physics in 1982. These universities educate the majority of the DPRK's nuclear scientists and technicians, as well as provide basic nuclear research.

In 1984, the DPRK started to construct an indigenously designed 200MWt gas graphite reactor at Youngdong.[198] This reactor was scheduled to begin operating in 1995. The United States had long monitored DPRK nuclear activities, but it was 1985 before Washington identified the construction of the 30MWt nuclear reactor at Youngdong,[199] and asked Moscow to urge North Korea to join the NPT.[200] North Korea joined the NPT on December 12, 1985, partially motivated by Moscow's promise of four nuclear power reactors.[201] U.S. concerns about Pyongyang's intentions were eased somewhat with North Korea's signing of the NPT, but were raised again with United States awareness of North Korean efforts to reprocess plutonium.

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output MWe. ROK and U.S.A. sources, however, seeing no evidence of any electrical generation, identify the same reactors by their thermal output. Bermudez, "North Korea's Nuclear Infrastructure", 74-79.

[197]Bermudez, "North Korea's Nuclear Infrastructure", 78.

[198]Ibid., 78.

[199]Young-Sun Song, "The North Korean Nuclear Issue," Korea and World Affairs 15, no.3 (Fall 1991):478.

[200]Korea Herald, June 5, 1985, 3.

[201]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 233. On December 26, 1985, the Soviet premier Ryzhhkov and DPRK Prime Minister Kang, Song-San signed a framework in which the USSR promised to construct four pressurized water reactors (VVER-440 type) with an installed capacity of 1,760MWe to the North. Mansourov, "Origins of the North Korean Nuclear Program," 37.

The milestone of DPRK's nuclear expansion was the completion of the 30MWt reactor (gas graphite design of 1940s, Calder Hall type) in 1986.[202] This reactor's large size and design is suited for the production of plutonium,[203] and it reflects North Korea's effort to be independent in nuclear activities. The gas-graphite design avoids the need for enriched uranium or heavy water, two commodities which North Korea did not then have the ability to produce.[204] By pursuing an autonomous program, Pyongyang was able to avoid possible constraints from nuclear supplier countries.

This 30MWt reactor played a key role in the DPRK nuclear program. North Korea insists that this reactor is a test atomic power plant designed for peaceful purposes. The reactor was first charged with nuclear fuel in 1986 and, except for some damaged fuel rods this original charge has not yet been removed. The replacement of damaged fuel rods occurred in 1989, when the reactor was shutdown for about 100 days.[205]

Such a reactor would not pose a problem unless there was a facility for extracting the plutonium from its spent fuel. In 1987, North Korea began the construction of a so-called "Radio-Chemistry Laboratory," an 180m-long and six-story-high facility. Although DPRK declared it a research facility, it was a reprocessing plant in the terminology of the industrial world, and could have the capacity to separate 200kg of plutonium per year.[206]

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[202]Mansourov, "Origins of the North Korean Nuclear Program," 26.

[203]As noted in Spector, Nuclear Ambitions, 346 footnote, most research reactors in the developing world are in the 1-5 MWt range. India's Cirus reactor, used to produce plutonium for its 1974 nuclear test, was a 40MWt. Also, Israel's Dimmona reactor was rated at 26MWt when it began to produce plutonium for its nuclear weapons in the mid-1960s.

[204]Bermudez, "North Korea's Nuclear Programme," 404-411.

[205]Bermudez, "North Korea's Nuclear Infrastructure," 78.

[206]Ibid., 78. There is a good possibility that the DPRK has an undeclared pilot processing facility. Hans Blix, the IAEA's Director General, during his inspection on Yongbyon facility in 1992, commented, "The timetable of the operations and the industrial logic seemed to suggest that a small pilot plant should have proceeded a full-scale reprocessing facility. The jump from a modest radio-chemistry laboratory to a

North Korea also has a high-explosive test sight along the sandy bank of the Kuryong-river.[207]

The expansion was so vigorous that the Yongbyon AERC alone has more than 100 nuclear related facilities,[208] including three for nuclear waste storage[209] and one for fuel fabrication. Other facilities planned or completed in the expansion period include: one 200MWe gas-graphite reactor, scheduled to be completed in 1996 at Taechon, four VVER reactors (1760MWe) for a nuclear power plant being planned at Sinpo, uranium mines in Hungnam, uranium refinement facilities in Dusong and Pakchon, and nuclear research facility in Pyongsong and Pakchon. One point to be mentioned here is that the overall North Korean nuclear expansion has been made by indigenous technology. Now North Korea has a total of 2,400 nuclear specialists, of whom 150 have doctoral degrees, who are stationed in the Yongbyon special district.[210]

North Korea's long-standing nuclear weapons effort is impressive. The country has uranium mines and can make uranium fuel rods.[211] The 30MWt gas-graphite reactor that uses natural uranium could produce about 7-8 kg of plutonium, enough for one-

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full reprocessing plant is hard to understand for anyone whose thinking is formed by international experience.'

[207]This open-air explosive test site is on the agenda for future IAEA inspections. Because the development of a high explosive triggering device for a nuclear weapon is a test of precision capabilities and not destructive power, it can be easily accomplished in specially constructed laboratories (Sweden used an underground test site) which would be the DPRK's preference. Bermudez, "North Korea's Nuclear Infrastructure," 79.

[208]Tai-Sung An, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program," 677.

[209]Bermudez, "North Korea's Nuclear Infrastructure," 79.

[210]Tai-Sung An, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Program," 675.

[211]Sometime between 1984 and 1987, a west-German chemical and metal firm, Degussa AG, illegally exported small quantities of U.S.-origin zirconium to North Korea. The Zirconium could be used for scientific analysis to benefit indigenous production. Spector, Nuclear Ambitions, 127.

kiloton bomb each year.[212] The 200MWt reactor and a 600-800MWt reactor at Taechon, if they are completed, could each produce enough spent fuel for 40 to 50 kilograms and 140 to 180 kilograms of plutonium.[213] North Korea also has reported to have extracted a small quantity of plutonium at the Isotope Processing Facility, and was building a large "Radio-Chemistry Laboratory," a reprocessing plant that could separate 200 kilograms of plutonium per year. Moreover, Pyongyang has a high explosive test site. Finally, the DPRK has a significant ballistic missile capability and continues their ambitious missile development program.[214] In sum, North Korea has tried to acquire complete nuclear weapons facilities, from the mining of uranium to a delivery system.

However, a more detailed look shows the somewhat ambiguous nature of the North Korean nuclear program. The fact known to the public are not confirmed. The IAEA reported that North Korea admitted to having reprocessed 90 grams of plutonium, but has some empirical evidence that the North had reprocessed an unknown amount in addition. There is also no empirical evidence that North Korea successfully weaponized the plutonium, although it is clearly trying to do so. Moreover, there is no evidence that North Korea has test-detonated a nuclear weapon.[215] Everything is ambiguous but one

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[212]John McBeth, Nayan Chanda and Shada Islam, "Pyongyang could be trying to build the bomb: Nuclear Jitters," Far Eastern Economic Review, Feb. 2, 1989, 15; The IAEA defines a "significant quantities" of fissile material as 8 kg of plutonium or 25 kg of highly enriched uranium. U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, Technology Underlying Weapons of Mass Destruction, OTA-BP-ISC-115 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GPO, December 1993), 184.

[213]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 234.

[214]In 1993, North Korea succeeded in testing a No-dong 1 ballistic missile at a range of 500km. The completed No-dong 1 would have a 1,300km range. North Korea also has developed more sophisticated ballistic missiles: the Taepo-dong 1 and 2, which have ranges of 2000km and 3500km, respectively. Greg Gerardi and Joseph Bermudez Jr., "An Analysis of North Korean Ballistic Missile Testing," in Jane's Intelligence Review 7, no.4 (April 1995): 184-190.

[215]Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Subcommittees on International Security, International Organizations and Human Rights, and Asia and the Pacific, "The Security Situation on the Korean Peninsula," 103rd Cong., 2nd sess., February 24, 1994, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GPO, 1994), 51-53.

thing is clear, as one U.S. official says, North Korea's nuclear weapons program is proceeding at a "deliberate pace" but is not "galloping ahead."[216]

4. Diplomatic Maneuvers

Upon signing the NPT in December 1985, North Korea was required to place all of its nuclear facilities under IAEA inspection provisions within eighteen months. Pyongyang, however, allowed IAEA inspectors to visit only two small nuclear reactors supplied to it in the 1960s by the USSR. At the end of the eighteen months, North Korea declared that the IAEA had presented an incorrect version of the proposed agreement, "which was based on the IAEA's non-NPT safeguards agreements and which would have imposed unequally stringent controls on North Korea in comparison to other NPT parties."[217] The IAEA admitted the mistake, and sent Pyongyang a new draft agreement, granting the DPRK a second eighteen-month grace period, which expired at the end of 1988. North Korea again demanded significant changes in the second draft accord, "including new language in the agreement's preamble objecting to the presence of U.S. nuclear forces in South Korea." The agency rejected it on the grounds that the NPT safeguard agreement is a standard document, applicable to all non-nuclear party states in the NPT equally.

In spring 1989, North Korea shut down the 30MWt reactor at Yongbyon for three months, raising anxieties that the DPRK had removed some nuclear fuel rods from the core.[218] Moreover, in the same year, U.S. satellite cameras detected a mysterious extra

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[216]Henry Rowan, U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Quoted in Andrew Mack, "The Nuclear Card."

[217]Information in this paragraph was found in Spector, Nuclear Ambitions, 129.

[218]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 236.

facility that was believed to be a plutonium reprocessing facility.[219] Since there is no legitimate use for plutonium in North Korea's peaceful nuclear program, the United States and South Korea assume that the facility is intended to produce material for nuclear weapons.[220] Leading nuclear expert Leonard Spector said, "if you have evidence that they have a reprocessing centre next to the reactor, then that is clear evidence of North Korea's intention to acquire weapons-grade material."[221]

Pyongyang denied any assertions of its nuclear weapons program by saying that "North Korea does not have the technological know-how to produce nuclear weapons".[222] North Korea restricted its comments on nuclear matters to a campaign to make the Korean peninsula "nuclear free." In 1989, North Korea proposed a "Nuclear Free Zone" on the peninsula.[223] The United States and South Korea rejected the DPRK's proposal as self-serving, because it would remove U.S. nuclear weapons from the South without any compensatory reduction of military strength in the North. In fact, Pyongyang's demands that the United States remove all its nuclear weapons in exchange for North Korea's signature on IAEA safeguards agreement made it politically impossible for the United States to do so.[224]

North Korea's diplomatic maneuver, however, did not go forward without difficulty. The alleged North Korean bomb program was a concern for both Washington

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[219]Spector, Nuclear Ambitions, 126. Two Japanese scientists from Tokai University, using French SPOT satellite photographs, also published their analysis of Yongbyon facility which clearly shows three reactors. Bermudez, "North Korea's Nuclear Programme," 404-411.

[220]Spector, Nuclear Ambitions, 128.

[221]John McBeth, "Nuclear Jitters," 15.

[222]FBIS-EAS-89-159, August 18, 1989.

[223]Nodong Sinmun, 30 August 1989

[224]Andrew Mack, "The Nuclear Card," Far Eastern Economic Review, May 31, 1990, 24.

and Moscow. In April, 1990, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze met and agreed on the importance of North Korea accepting IAEA safeguards.[225] At first, the United States and South Korea tried to persuade the North to sign the IAEA safeguards as a first step toward ending Pyongyang's nuclear program, but the effort failed. On December 31, 1991, the two Koreas signed two important agreements.[226] One is an accord on Non-aggression and Reconciliation, which was designed to promote wide-ranging political and economic contacts between the North and South. The other is an agreement on a Joint Declaration on a non-Nuclear Korean Peninsula separate from IAEA safeguards, which banned them from producing, processing or deploying nuclear weapons of any type, and allowed extensive and intrusive inspections in both Koreas to monitor implementations of the agreement.[227]

At last, North Korea promised to complete its safeguard agreement with IAEA in February 1992.[228] North Korea had delayed this agreement, which should have been completed within eighteen months of signing the NPT in December 1985, for six years. On May 4, 1992, North Korea handed, its initial declaration of nuclear materials and facilities to the IAEA's Director General Hans Blix.[229] It reported about ninety grams of plutonium separated from fuel from both its IRT and 30MW reactors. Pyongyang also invited Blix to Yongbyon in May 1992, and the first IAEA inspection team arrived at the

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[225]Ibid., 24.

[226]"Koreas Reach Nuclear-free Pact," Herald (Monterey), December 31, 1991.

[227]These pledges far exceeded what was required by the NPT and the IAEA safeguards agreements that do not ban reprocessing and enrichment facilities.

[228]Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 76.

[229]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 241.

end of the month. The IAEA's mission was to confirm that the initial declaration was accurate and complete.[230] This process collapsed in the second half of 1992.

The IAEA found inconsistencies indicating that North Korea probably produced more plutonium than it reported. An isotopic examination of the nuclear waste revealed that there were four efforts to separate plutonium, not one.[231] The IAEA requested permission to visit the two nuclear waste sites at Yongbyon to resolve the issue, but North Korea turned down this request. On February 9, 1993, the IAEA demanded "special inspections" for the first time in IAEA history. On March 12, rather than fulfill its international obligations, North Korea announced that it was withdrawing from the NPT.[232]

A crisis atmosphere quickly emerged on the Peninsula. After substantial negotiation and brinkmanship, Pyongyang announced on June 11 that it would suspend its withdrawal from the NPT and continue to abide by its commitments under the treaty.[233] North Korea requested direct negotiation with the United States without South Korean presence, and tough negotiations followed throughout 1993 and 1994. In January, 1994, it was reported that a new CIA classified special National Intelligence Estimate contended that there is a "somewhat better than even" chance that North Korea has one or

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[230]This is known as an "ad hoc" inspection. After verifying the initial declaration, the IAEA usually conduct "routine" inspections according to specific "facility attachments." "Special" inspections can be enforced "to grant the IAEA access to sites not identified in a state's initial declaration." Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 241-242.

[231]The IAEA analysis indicated that the DPRK has repressed information on at least four times: 1989, 1990, 1991, and 1992. Sources variously estimate that the spent fuel from the 30MWt reactor could, after reprocessing, provide the DPRK about 10-17kg of plutonium. Bermudez, "North Korea's Nuclear Infrastructure," 78.

[232]Peter Grier, "N. Korea Imperils Efforts to Curb Nuclear Weapons," Christian Science Monitor, March 23, 1993, p.6.

[233]Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 121. "Joint Statement of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America," New York Times, June 1, 1993.

two nuclear bombs. [234] Washington was already considering economic sanctions, and even the possibility of military strikes, on Pyongyang's nuclear facilities.[235]

To make matters worse, in April 1994, North Korea announced that it had shut down the 30MWt reactor in Yongbyon, and would begin unloading the fuel. Sources estimated that the fuel could, after reprocessing, provide about 10-17 kg of plutonium.[236] The IAEA requested to inspect the fuel and warned that a lack of monitoring would result in a loss of its ability to verify safeguards. North Korea rejected the request, and allowed IAEA inspectors to observe only the withdrawal. The removal began on May 13. Finally in early June 1994, Washington called for the UN Security Council to discuss sanctions against North Korea.[237] On June 5, North Korea reminded the world of its position that "sanctions mean war and there is no mercy in war."[238]

In June 1994 former U.S. President Jimmy Carter went to Pyongyang and met with Kim Il-Sung. North Korea agreed to freeze its nuclear program to prevent further plutonium production in exchange for U.S. concession on suspending its effort to coordinate sanctions and resuming bilateral negotiations.[239] Both agreed to meet on July 8 in Geneva for official confirmation of the freeze and U.S. compensation for North Korea's termination of its nuclear program. But the same day, Kim Il-Sung, North Korea's

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[234]"A Game of Nuclear Roulette," Time, January 10, 1994, pp. 28-29; Defense Secretary Les Aspin also said that North Korea" might possess a single nuclear device." Kenneth R. Timmerman, "From Baghdad to Pyongyang: Going Ballistic," New Republic, January 24, 1994, pp. 12-15.

[235]Far Eastern Economic Review, February 10, 1994, pp.22-23; New Republic, p.14.

[236]Bermudez, "North Korea's Nuclear Infrastructure," 78.

[237]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 288-270.

[238]Peter Grier, "China May Be Wild Card in N. Korea Drama," Christian Science Monitor, June 7, 1994, p.3.

[239]"Freeze the Waste," Far Eastern Economic Review, August 11, 1994, p.16.

absolute ruler, died of a heart attack. After weeks of delay, the two parties met again in early August and settled on a bilateral statement of principles called the "agreed statement."[240] The statement laid out the mutual commitments and established the rough outlines of a negotiation on the nuclear issue.[241]

Finally, after more consultations, Ambassador-at-Large Robert Gallucci and North Korean First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok-Ju formally signed the "Agreed Framework" on October 21.[242] The agreement can be divided into three main phases.

In the first phase, North Korea would freeze activity at its existing reactor and at the processing site, and promise not to build any new graphite reactors or reprocessing facilities; the eight thousand spent fuel rods from the 30MWt reactor would remain in a special can for long-term storage; the North would allow regular IAEA inspections by the terms of the NPT. In exchange, the United States promised not to use nuclear weapons against North Korea, to begin political and economic contacts between the two countries within three months, and to provide two light-water reactors (LWRs) by a target date of 2003. The United States also promised to supply oil as a replacement for about two hundred and fifty megawatts of electricity that could be produced by the three graphite reactors in the North.

In the second phase, when construction of the first reactor is well under way, but before delivery of key nuclear components, North Korea would allow IAEA special inspections of its two nuclear waste sites and begin the shipment of its spent fuel rods to

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[240]R. Jeffery Smith," N. Korea, U.S. Pledge Closer Ties," Washington Post, August 13, 1994, A1.

[241]For the text of the statement see Arms Control Today, September 1994, 23.

[242]David E. Sanger, "Clinton Approves a Plan to Give Aid to North Koreans," New York Times, October 19, 1994, pp. A1, A14. R. Michael R. Gordon, "U.S.-North Korea Accord has a 10-year Timetable", New York Times, October 21, 1994, p. A8. "Agreed Framework Between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," Arms Control Today, December 1994, p.19.

abroad. The shipment would begin when the first component of the LWR arrived in the North, and finish when the first LWR was complete. The third and final phase, as the second LWR nears completion, North Korea would dismantle all its nuclear-weapons-making facilities, including the thirty-megawatt reactor, two old graphite reactors, and the reprocessing plant.

The remaining months of 1994 and the first half of 1995 showed that executing the Agreed Framework would never be as easy as making the agreement. In negotiations for a supply contract, Pyongyang asked Washington for more economic assistance and refused to accept South Korean-made, LWRs and the technical help to install them.[243] Concerns for delaying the agreement were aroused again by North Korea's "crisis politics," and Washington and Pyongyang exchanged threats about United Nations sanctions and an initiation of war.[244] The dispute appeared to be solved in July 1995, at meetings between the two in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia. The joint U.S.-North Korean press statement notes that "the reactor model, selected by KEDO [Korean Peninsular Energy Development Organization], will be the advanced version of U.S.-origin design and technology currently under production."[245] There is no guarantee, however, that North Korea will not attempt to renegotiate the nuclear agreement again.

5. Motivations for a Nuclear Weapons Program

North Korea's possible motivations for seeking nuclear weapons were varied and thus eliminated the possibility of any strategy designed to address a single cause. There seem to be at least five possible motives for North Korean nuclear weapons development:

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[243]Korea Herald, February 9, 1995, p.1.

[244]Richard C. Hottelet, "The Korean Mouse That Roared," Christian Science Monitor, April 20, 1995, p.19.

[245]"Full text of joint U.S.-N.K. press statement," Korea Herald, June 14, 1995, P.2.

deterring U.S. and latent South Korean nuclear threats; having a "strategic equalizer" against evolving South Korean conventional forces; reducing its dependence on security assistance from China and the former Soviet Union; sustaining its regime survival; and using nuclear weapons for bargaining leverage.[246]

The balance among these interests appeared to have changed over time. The early North Korean nuclear program seems to have been a response to a security challenge: dealing with U.S. and, potentially, South Korean nuclear threats without counting on the support of either China or the Soviet Union. Over time, however, the North's motivations seem to have evolved. Beginning in the late 1980s, the real threats to the North's regime was not external but internal in nature, which include a crumbling economy and leadership succession problems. Pyongyang might consider its nuclear program as a means for regime survival. Officials in Pyongyang learned how useful an ambiguous nuclear capability could be in getting attention, wringing security concessions out of Seoul and Washington, and acquiring pledges of economic assistance and expanded diplomatic relations.[247] North Korea's evolving nuclear motivations will be examined in Chapter VI through the theory of asymmetric conflicts.

B. THE ORIGIN OF CONFRONTATION

A potential North Korean nuclear weapons program causes serious security threats to the United States and South Korea. It threatens U.S. interests in global nuclear

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[246]For North Korea's motivations for its nuclear program see Andrew Mack, "The Nuclear Crisis on the Korean Peninsula," Asian Survey 33, no. 4 (April 1993): 339-359; Darryl Howlett, "Nuclearization or Denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula?" Contemporary Security Policy 15, no.2 (August 1994): 174-193; Mazarr, North Korean and the Bomb, 15-34. This paper adopts Mazarr's study on Pyongyang's five motivations; For nuclear proliferation theories see Stephen M. Meyer, Dynamics of Nuclear Proliferation. Zachary S. Davis and Benjamin Frankel, ed. The Proliferation Puzzle: Why Nuclear Weapons Spread (London: Frank Cass, 1993).

[247]Mazarr, "Going Just a Little Nuclear," 100.

nonproliferation and in maintaining stability in Northeast Asia. The North's nuclear program also endangers South Korea's national interests, namely the possibility of peaceful unification and growing democracy.

1. The United States and North Korea

The possibility of North Korean nuclear weapons acquisition aroused immediate security concerns in the United States in both global and regional terms. The United States regards the spread of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction together with major regional conflicts as key threats to the U.S. security in the post-Cold War era.[248] Thus, fostering global and regional nonproliferation became a key U.S. interest. In November 1991 Secretary of State James Baker described Pyongyang's program as "not just a Korean issue, but a matter of global concern," and "the number one threat to security in Northeast Asia."[249]

Although North Korea's nuclear arsenal does not pose a direct threat to the United States (i.e., the North has neither a reason to attack the United States nor the continental range delivery system),[250] nonetheless, a nuclear-armed North Korea does endanger vital U.S. interests.

First, North Korea challenged one of the vital interests of the United States, namely nuclear nonproliferation. Kathleen Bailey noted:

> It damaged the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), as well as the system of international safeguards that help assure peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Like Iraq, North Korea was party to the NPT and used it as a smokescreen for secret nuclear activities. Also, North Korea has defied the

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[248]See National Strategy of the Engagement and Enlargement, The White House, February 1995, 1. and Les Aspin, Secretary of Defense, Report on the Bottom Up Review (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, October 1993), 5-12.

[249]Wolfsthal, "International Pressure Intensifies On North Korean Bomb," 22.

[250]Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 6.

request for special inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), setting a disturbing precedent.[251]

Above all, the approach of the Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference in May 1995, gave great precedent-setting significance to the nonproliferation effort in Korea. The task provided a disturbing dilemma. "Every tough stance might have alienated some developing countries already uncomfortable with the NPT's inherent inequity; an ineffectual response might have ruined the NPT's credibility."[252] North Korea, which had sold its weapons to other nations, might export nuclear material and technology. Moreover, allowing Pyongyang to build nuclear weapons might have caused Japan and South Korea to rethink their own nuclear programs, but using military and political threats to make North Korea give up its nuclear bomb program could raise tensions in the region and risk a conflict that neither Japan nor South Korea want.[253]

Second, the North Korean nuclear program affects another U.S. objective, promoting regional stability. It jeopardizes the credibility of U.S. defense commitments to two security treaty allies, Japan and South Korea, and the stability of the entire Northeast Asian region. Above all, it will reduce U.S. freedom of action by complicating its tasks on a possible conflict on the peninsula. Deterrence, especially by a threat of retaliation, might not work in these circumstances. If a war occurs on the Korean peninsula again, "deterrence could easily fail: on the verge of being conquered, with nothing to lose, the North might choose to lash out with nuclear weapons."[254]

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[251]Kathleen C. Bailey, "The Nuclear Deal with North Korea: Is the Glass Half Empty or Half Full?," Comparative Strategy 14, no.2 (Spring 1995): 137-148. Quoted in 137.

[252]Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 9.

[253]Mazarr, "Going Just a Little Nuclear," 94.

[254]Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 7.

Dealing with the North Korean nuclear challenge would raise new disputes with China. Washington's goal of promoting reform in, and good relations with China could have suffered if confrontation with North Korea were prolonged. China considered sanctions "hegemonic," and stated that it opposes UN sanctions against North Korea.[255] Thus, using sanctions or other more coercive threats against North Korea could easily result in a confrontation with China.

In sum, the North Korean nuclear program threatens U.S. interests in global nonproliferation and in regional stability; thus, ending the North Korean nuclear weapons program is an imminent key U.S. interest.

2. South Korea and North Korea

The North Korean nuclear crisis endangered South Korea's two important national agendas, the possibility of peaceful unification and a growing democracy. First, South Korea expects that a peaceful unification with North Korea is possible through economic exchange and taking liberal ideas to the North. But the freeze on economic contacts and risk of a new crisis initiated by North Korea could push the North closer to collapse, making the hope for a stable and peaceful unification in Korea less likely. [256]

Next, the nuclear crisis could destroy "grass roots" democracy in South Korea. This is especially true, if "the northern threat, coupled with doubts about America's determination to take the South's side," revives conservatives who held power under military regimes and, thus, "destroy the confidence that South Korea needs in order to liberalize its politics."[257] However, South Korea views Pyongyang's nuclear program as a

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[255]Alexander T. Lennon, "UN Sanctions Against North Korea Won't Work," Christian Science Monitor, March 25, 1994, p.23.

[256]Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 49.

[257]"Infection from the North," Economist, March 18, 1995, p.34.

regional issue, not a global one. Seoul says Washington is misreading Pyongyang's motives and is overreacting to its military capability. Even in 1993, when North Korea had already begun its dangerous nuclear diplomacy by announcing withdrawal from the NPT, South Korea did not believe Pyongyang was as close to developing nuclear bombs as the United States estimated. Seoul considers North Korea's nuclear program to be "Pyongyang's ultimate bargaining chip in an effort to win diplomatic and economic concessions from the U.S."[258]

Of course, South Korea does not want to see Pyongyang develop nuclear weapons, but it also does not want to see a war on the Peninsula. In the early stages of the crisis, Seoul generally insisted upon a cautious approach, while Washington often referred to sanctions and other punishments the North would suffer if it did not change its policy.[259] Seoul feared crisis escalation on the peninsula caused by overreaction to Pyongyang's nuclear diplomacy.

C. SUMMARY

This chapter surveyed the evolution of the North Korean nuclear program and the dangers perceived by the United States and South Korea. It explained that North Korea has endeavored to acquire an indigenous nuclear technology, and has succeeded in producing weapons-grade plutonium. The United States and South Korea view the character of the crisis differently. North Korea's potential nuclear weapons capability threatens the U.S. interest in global nuclear nonproliferation and in maintaining stability in

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[258] Glain, Steve, "In Role Swap, South Korea Says Nuclear Threat from North Korea is Overemphasized by U.S.," Asian Wall Street Journal Weekly, December 20, 1993, p.3.

[259] Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 111.

the region. It also endangers South Korean concerns for maintaining domestic and regional stabilities.

Although the United States and South Korea have different views on the characteristics of the dangers, Washington and Seoul generally remained cooperative in dealing with the North Korean nuclear crisis. First of all, both the United States and South Korea did not want to see a nuclear armed North Korea. Second, Washington recognized the Kim Young Sam government's political difficulties at home because "the nuclear issue was not simply one foreign policy issue among many, but an emotional bombshell that dominated all public discussions of foreign affairs in Seoul."[260] The "broad and thorough approach"—give North Koreans the chance to broaden the dialogue in exchange for its acceptance of nuclear safeguards inspection—relied on negotiations and dialogue rather than pressures to solve the nuclear issue.[261]

The next chapter tests the hypotheses that have been advanced through a detailed case study of the North Korean nuclear crisis.

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[260]Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 142.

[261]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 262.

VI. THE NUCLEAR CRISIS

The previous chapter explained the history of the North Korean nuclear crisis and the threats it presented to the United States and South Korea. This chapter examines why North Korea chose a policy which could have endangered its very existence. It also analyzes what factors among the five independent variables induced it to initiate a political challenge. The objective is to determine why weak states initiate political challenge against stronger states at certain times.

This study finds two significant factors that produced the North Korean crisis: Pyongyang's limited aims/fait accompli strategy, and changing domestic political conditions in North Korea. North Korea's decision to initiate a political challenge was influenced more by these two factors than by its offensive capability, support from stronger powers, or coercive pressures from the United States and South Korea.

A. U.S. AND SOUTH KOREAN STRATEGIES

Understanding the strategies of the United States and South Korea is necessary to determine whether North Korea's nuclear policy is reactionary or the product of its own calculations.

1. U.S. Strategy

The U.S. objectives for the North Korean nuclear crisis varied from "rolling back" or decreasing the North's nuclear program, to containing the current status of the program, and to changing the North's regime. The United States also employed two sub-strategies: a combination of pressure and graduated incentives, and the "broad and thorough" approach.

Roll Back. Initially, in early 1992, the U.S. strategy was to completely end Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program through a viable North-South nonproliferation regime. Secretary of State James Baker argued that "IAEA safeguards cannot ensure that a renegade regime will not seek to acquire nuclear weapons... the only firm assurance against a nuclear arms race on the Korean peninsula would be a credible agreement by both Seoul and Pyongyang to abstain from the production or acquisition of any weapons-grade nuclear materials."[262] The United States tried to draw the North into negotiations by offering a series of concessions, such as direct dialogue, promises of economic aid, and a negative nuclear security guarantee if Pyongyang would abide by its commitments to the NPT. The United States assumed that the crisis could be solved if Washington correctly identified Pyongyang's interests and provided U.S. unilateral concessions.

Over the past several years, the United States has made several unilateral concessions, including an assurance that there are no U.S. nuclear weapons in South Korea, the cancellation of Team Spirit military exercises, and high level meetings between the United States and North Korea. If North Korea would be more cooperative, further concessions would follow. Otherwise, the United States would isolate North Korea politically and economically.[263]

In mid-1992, inter-Korean dialogue on the nuclear issue was stalled, so the United States and South Korea conducted "Ulchi Focus Lens," a joint military exercise to show a united front to the North. This exercise was a limited wargame-type command and control exercise, but it was converted into a proxy for the Team Spirit Exercises, which had been canceled earlier that year.[264]

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[262]Washington worried about the North's reprocessing facilities which are "not required for peaceful nuclear fledgling programs, but are not banned by the NPT if declared and inspected." Wolfsthal, "International Pressure Intensifies On North Korean Bomb," 20.

[263]Wendt, North Korean Nuclear Program, 5.

[264]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 296 footnote.

Until the end of January 1993, Washington tried to curb the North's nuclear ambition through a North-South agency, the Joint Nuclear Control Commission (JNCC), established in March 1992. However, the United States began to rethink the wisdom of a policy that featured the North-South agency as its centerpiece when the talks between the two Koreas were stalled.[265]

Washington regarded the IAEA inspections as an alternative measure.[266] The United States also increased pressure on North Korea. The Bush Administration considered a preemptive military strike on the Yongbyon nuclear complex. In November 1991, Defense Secretary Richard Cheney, JCS Chairman General Colin Powell, and their South Korean counterparts discussed the possibility of a preemptive strike,[267] as did the Clinton Administration in mid-December 1993. Military strikes were not viable because it was almost impossible to locate all North Korean nuclear facilities, and the military had no means to attack deeply buried targets.[268]

When North Korea announced its withdrawal from the NPT on March 12, 1993, Washington was cautious in commenting about Pyongyang's decision.[269] However, the

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[265]The U.S. recognized that bilateral inspections would not provide much confidence because of the technical inexperience of South Korean inspectors. U.S. inspectors could not participate because South Korea strongly objected to U.S. participation, while the North accepted the idea. Ibid., 245. See also 297 footnote.

[266]Ibid., 245.

[267]Leslie Helm and Jim Mann, "2 Koreas Move Toward Accord to Bar A-Arms," Los Angeles Times, December 12, 1991. They used the term "preemptive". But what the strike would have been was "preventive."

[268]Kenneth R. Timmerman, "Going Ballistic: From Baghdad to Pyongyang," New Republic, January 24, 1994, 12-15.

[269]In a interview on CBS *48 Hours*, President Clinton said that he hoped and prayed that the North would rethink its withdrawal from the NPT. Secretary of State Christopher testified before the House of Representatives, "There seem to be a number of ways in which pressure can be put on [North Korea], and perhaps we won't have to get to that point because they'll realize earlier on that they made a mistake in withdrawing from this convention." Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 300, footnote.

United States was moving toward tougher policies to signal its determination to Pyongyang. The United States shipped Patriot antimissile batteries to South Korea, and replaced old U.S. Army helicopters with new APACHE attack helicopters, and enhanced U.S. Air Forces there.[270] Moreover, the United States tried to organize multilateral support for UN sanctions.

By June 1994 the United States formalized a two-phased strategy for UN sanctions against North Korea. The plan called for the UN Security Council to endorse moderate sanctions that would start in thirty days. These sanctions would be followed by harsher sanctions, which would include stopping money flows from Koreans living in Japan to the North.[271] UN sanctions, however, would have limited success. The North had long been an isolated state with minimum contacts with the outside world. Also, China—which provides most of the North Korea's energy and food—could veto such decisions in the UN Security Council.[272]

Containment. In November 1993 the United States and South Korea announced a new approach, a "thorough and broad" effort to bring about a final decision.[273] This strategy was an attempt to broaden the focus of the U.S. effort by considering not just the nuclear issue but a wider array of issues. This approach was also based on the idea of changes in the entire U.S.-North Korean relationship, in which North Korea would receive

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[270]R, Jeffery Smith and Ann Devroy, "Clinton Orders Patriot Missiles to South Korea," Washington Post, March 22, 1994. David E. Sanger, "North Korea Warns U.S. on Patriot Missiles," New York Times, January 30, 1994.

[271]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 270.

[272]See Alexander T. Lennon, "UN Sanctions Against North Korea Won't Work," Christian Science Monitor, March 25, 1994, p.23; Peter Grier, "At UN, China Stalls US Drive for Action Against North Korea," Christian Science Monitor, April 1, 1994, p.4. In 1993, China provided 72 percent of its oil imports and 88 percent of the cooking coal it needed for steel production. Ed Paisley, "Prepared for the Worst," 23.

[273]Thomas L. Friedman, "U.S. and Seoul Differ on Offer to North," New York Times, November 24, 1993.

recognition from the United States and Japan, and normalization of relations.[274] In exchange, North Korea would satisfy two conditions: full-scope IAEA inspections and direct talks with South Korea. This exchange was based on the notion that gradual concessions and pressures had been ineffective because North Korea's basic concern, regime survival, had not been considered.[275] Although the Pyongyang regime might survive after the nuclear crisis is resolved, it could become a more "normal" member of the international community, and the threat it poses to the region would diminish.

The Clinton Administration had no choice but to adopt the broad and thorough approach because it lacked other strong policy options.[276] Military and economic pressures were not viable; Washington could not rely on the strong deterrence policy that had successfully prevented a North Korean invasion for the last four decades. It was not certain whether deterrence could prevent North Korea from developing a sizeable nuclear arsenal by reprocessing the nuclear fuel in the 30MW reactor. Moreover, it was doubtful whether U.S. deterrence could prevent, or even detect, North Korean exports of weapons-grade plutonium to other countries, especially to the Middle East.[277] Therefore, Pyongyang's nuclear potential forced Washington to continue negotiations with the North at almost any cost.

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[274]This approach was also known as "Comprehensive Settlement." Wendt, North Korean Nuclear Program, 6.

[275]Ibid., 6.

[276]"One fundamental U.S. error in 1993-94 was thinking that Washington had a strong hand to play, and that small, isolated, impoverished North Korea had a weak one. In fact, the opposite was closer to the truth. U.S. policy labored under a powerful 'disadvantage'—its traditional opposition to nuclear proliferation and its long-standing support for integrity of the IAEA and the NPT regime. North Korea, needless to say, suffered from none of these constraints." Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 281.

[277]Ibid., 262-263.

This policy implicitly displayed U.S. willingness to permit North Korean nuclear weapons developed before the crisis to "cap" their nuclear weapons program.[278] In January 1994 "U.S. and North Korean negotiators agreed to defer the question of a possible 1989 diversion of weapons-grade plutonium and to concentrate instead on monitoring Pyongyang's current and future nuclear program."[279] With this latent nuclear capability, Pyongyang was able to bargain for various concessions, such as economic aid and diplomatic recognition, as well as a security guarantee from the United States.

Changing the North Korean Regime. Former President Jimmy Carter's visit to Pyongyang in June 1994, became a turning point in U.S. strategy toward the North. By approving Carter's visit, President Clinton tacitly admitted his doubts about the wisdom of the strategy that he had approved since his presidency: UN sanctions in response to North Korea's rejection on IAEA inspections.[280]

Four months later, on October 21, 1994, the United States and North Korea signed the Agreed Framework, which freezes and then dismantles the North's nuclear program in return for two less dangerous light-water reactors (LWRs) for electric power. It also guarantees normal diplomatic, trade, and aid relations between the two countries. This seems to suggest that a fundamental shift away from the U.S. policy of deterrence by pressure to a policy of concession. The U.S. intention was to "open the isolated, xenophobic nation to outside ideas, move its economy toward capitalism and encourage it

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[278]This shows a movement from a policy of prevention or "roll back" to one of containment. Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 263. Washington did not know exactly how much plutonium was extracted from the 30MWt nuclear reactor. Experts say 12kg (26 lbs.) would be enough for one or two bombs. Nelan, "A Game of Nuclear Roulette," 29.

[279]"Will Kim Risk a War?" Newsweek, June 20, 1994, 48; In the early 1995, U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry stated that U.S. policy towards the DPRK "...had been oriented to try to keep North Korea from getting a significant nuclear-weapon capability." The idea of offering concessions to a state to freeze rather than destroy a nuclear program was also applied to a deal with Pakistan. Andrew Mack, "A Nuclear Free Zone for Northeast Asia," Journal of East Asian Affairs 9, no.2 (Summer/Fall 1995): 288-322.

[280]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 271.

to develop stable economic and political relations with South Korea and Japan—neighbors with which it has little trade or direct contact."[281]

Nonetheless, in early 1995, the United States had to use pressure again. North Korea rejected two LWRs provided by South Korea, which were to finance half of the four billion dollars supply contract. The North also demanded an additional one billion dollars for the provision of a power grid and power distribution infrastructure. Although the United States understood that the North would have political difficulties with South Korean-built reactors in its country, "there simply was no alternative."[282] Washington warned Pyongyang that further delaying and violations of the Agreed Framework would result in economic sanctions.[283]

Analysis. No single approach could achieve US interests in both global nonproliferation and regional stability. Pressure, economic sanctions, and military coercion were not viable options without close cooperation from China, Japan, and South Korea. All of these nations, however, were reluctant to support these options because of the possibility of uncontrollable escalation of the crisis. Offering graduated incentives was not successful, because it did not take into account the North Korean need for regime survival. Acknowledging the inefficiency of previous strategies, Washington made a broad and thorough approach. This approach was the most successful, but it often was stalled by North Korean efforts to play South Korea against the Unites States, and sometimes by Seoul's worries about its limited role in the negotiations with North Korea.

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[281]R. Jeffrey Smith, "Can North Korea Change Its Spots?" Washington Post Weekly, October 31-November 6, 1994, p.17.

[282]Quote from the U.S. Chief Negotiator Robert C. Gallucci's statement in a Congressional subcommittee. Korea Herald, February 25, 1995, p.1.

[283]Richard C. Hottelet, "Korean Mouse That Roared."

2. South Korean Strategy

South Korea viewed the North Korean nuclear problem as a regional issue that should be solved by North and South Korea. South Korean strategies included a broad and thorough approach, dual policy, and a linkage policy. All of these were closely related to U.S. strategies. However, South Korea tried to to become the main player in dealing with the North.

Broad and Thorough Approach. South Korea's initial approach was broad and thorough, the same approach taken by the United States in late 1993. Seoul wanted to discuss the nuclear issue in a larger agenda with North Korea, one that included commercial ties. It did not want nuclear matters to hold hostage the broad range of issues the two Koreas needed to discuss. Seoul argued that the nuclear issue could be resolved more readily as part of a broader political and economic engagement with Pyongyang.[284]

Since mid-1988, South Korea made a new approach known as "Nordpolitik," which opened diplomatic relations with former communist nations. As a part of this approach, Seoul announced that it would cooperate with Pyongyang to help it improve relations with the United States and Japan, and it would not oppose trade, except military equipment, between the North and the South's allies.[285]

On November 8, 1991, Seoul pledged not to possess or deploy nuclear weapons in South Korea, and expected this announcement to be a way to convince the North to allow the IAEA inspections. "There can be no reason for the North to develop nuclear weapons or deny international inspection now," said one senior official in Seoul.[286] On

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[284]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 240.

[285]Ibid., 235.

[286]Seoul's announcements, however, did not indicate whether it allowed the passage of U.S. nuclear-armed vessels or aircraft in its territorial waters or across the skies. This meant that the U.S. nuclear umbrella would continue to protect the South; thus, Seoul's antinuclear policy did not relieve the Pyongyang's perception of the concept of a nuclear umbrella as a potential threat to its security. Shim Jae

February 19, 1992, North and South Korea ratified the denuclearization accords, which were signed on December 31, 1991. South Korea also tried to organize a summit meeting between Presidents Roh and Kim Il-Sung. However, Seoul had to end its summit plans, since Washington was furiously opposed to this idea.[287] In March 1992 Seoul and Pyongyang established the Joint Nuclear Control Commission (JNCC), which created an inspection agency to verify the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula in mid-June. On December 13, 1992, North and South Korea signed the Nonaggression and Reconciliation Agreement.

These warm relations, however, cooled off in early 1993, partly because of the North Korean spy ring operation uncovered in the ROK, and because of Seoul's decision to resume the Team Spirit 93' exercise.[288] For awhile, South Korea considered a preemptive strike on the North's nuclear facility. In the spring of 1993, South Korean intelligence officials reportedly visited Israel to learn details of Tel Aviv's experience in June 1981 raid on Iraq's Tammuz nuclear reactors.[289]

Dual Policy. When North Korea announced its withdrawal from the NPT in March 1993, and Washington threatened to impose sanctions, South Korea was trapped in a dilemma. On the one hand, the South was concerned that the North might acquire a nuclear arsenal. On the other hand, it worried that UN sanctions might provoke

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Hoon, "Roh anti-nuclear Policy to Pressure North Korea: Disarming argument," Far Eastern Economic Review, November 21, 1991, 13.

[287]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 240.

[288]For the North's spy ring operation see FBIS-EAS-92-198 (October 13, 1992), pp. 22-23, 46-47.

[289]The ROK defense minister, Lee Jong Koo also suggested that South Korea launch Entebbe-Style Commando raids to destroy Youngbyon. Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 258.

Pyongyang to launch a military attack or to disintegrate internally, which could bring a massive number of refugees to the South.[290]

Since then, the dual nature of South Korean behavior—unyielding when U.S. dialogue with North Korea went well, and compliant when the situation deteriorated—became a familiar and frustrating fact of life for American diplomats. "For example, when the United States moved toward increasing pressure on the North, the South was afraid such action could lead to instability and perhaps war. It then opposed such action. When the United States moved toward increasing concessions to the North, the South feared such concessions would be ineffective. Such concessions might undermine deterrence and encourage the North's nuclear program to move ahead."[291]

Although Seoul had been nervous about seeking UN sanctions, it now saw itself further marginalized as the United States took center stage with the North.[292] Seoul's basic idea was that the main players in the nuclear negotiations should be North and South Korea, not the North and the United States. Seoul wanted Washington to play a supporting role, and was not amenable to the Clinton Administration's broad and thorough approach. The United States, however, wanted to conclude the issue well before the 1995 NPT renewal convention.

The ambivalence of South Korean policy was also shown by South Korean President Kim Young-Sam. In November 1993 he openly complained that the United

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[290]See Kang-Suk Rhee, "Korea's Unification: The Applicability of the German Experience," Asian Survey 33, no.4 (April 1993): 360-375.

[291]James C. Wendt, "The North Korean Nuclear Program: What is to be done?" RAND, 1994, 17-18; South Korea's newly elected president Kim Young Sam's government has "jumped back and forth in an effort to maintain a balance between hawk and doves." Above all, Seoul was nervous to see direct negotiation between the U.S. and North Korea. See Nayan Chanda, "Divided Counsel," Far Eastern Economic Review, December 16, 1993, 16.

[292]At a November 23White House press conference by Presidents Clinton and Kim, Kim objected to the phrase "package deal," which had been originally suggested by the North. So Clinton agreed to use Kim's phrase, "broad and thorough" to characterize the new approach. Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 306, footnote.

States was being too conciliatory with Pyongyang. But, as the United States moved toward a harder line, President Kim agreed with his Foreign Minister Han Sung Joo to maintain talks with the North, even after the issue moved to the UN. Han offered to help Pyongyang build LWRs and to reopen trade between the two Koreas. In response, the North would give up its nuclear option.[293] However, the crisis on the peninsula continued, and hard-liners in Seoul blamed their government for weakness. Conservatives blamed Foreign Minister Han's moderate line for the North's brinkmanship and war-like posturing. Seemingly affected by these critics, President Kim changed his position on March 21, 1994. The Team Spirit exercise resumed the next month, and Patriot missiles would be deployed as soon as possible.[294]

Linkage Strategy. Later nuclear negotiations between the two Koreas were stalled further because of South Korea's linkage policy—a policy based on the idea that inter-Korean relations will not advance unless Pyongyang halts nuclear progress.[295] When North Korea and the United States held their third high-level talks in Geneva in August 1994, Pyongyang agreed to forego the reprocessing of 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods taken from the 30 megawatt reactor, freeze construction of two larger nuclear reactors, and seal its reprocessing facility at Yongbyon if Washington provided two LWRs. Seoul wanted Washington to link the diplomatic recognition process to North-South reconciliation in the same manner that it demanded South Korea to do the same in inter-Korean negotiation

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[293]Susumu Awanohara and Shim Jae Hoon, "Hawks Alight," Far Eastern Economic Review, February 24, 1994, 23-24.

[294]Nayan Chanda, "Seal of Disapproval", Far Eastern Economic Review, March 31, 1994, 14-15.

[295]According to Taewoo Kim, the linkage policy was forged in principle at the request of the U.S. government as part of America's indiscriminate and sweeping nonproliferation policy toward the nuclear "have-nots." Since the IAEA inspection lacked legal ground to demand the destruction of safeguarded nuclear facilities, the U.S. needed supplementary agencies under which South Korea could request the shutdown of North Korean nuclear facilities. This linkage, however, sacrificed the long-term interests of the Korean nations, peaceful coexistence. Taewoo Kim, "South Korea's Nuclear Dilemma," 252, 271-274.

in the late 1992. Seoul did not want Pyongyang to make use of the dialogue to exclude the South during forthcoming negotiations over the replacement of the 1953 armistice agreement with a permanent peace treaty.[296]

Analysis. Although South Korea and the United States differed in their policies toward North Korea, their differences were less significant than their common perception of the threat. Therefore, they could cooperate relatively well during the crisis. They both understood that shutting Seoul out of negotiations could have a destabilizing effect, because it could lead Pyongyang to believe that it could isolate the South.

Seoul and Washington agreed to encourage a North-South dialogue regarding the South's role in providing "South Korean-Style" LWRs to the North as implemented in the Agreed Framework. A U.S. Congressional resolution called for strengthening the Geneva Agreement by insisting on real progress in the dialogue and observance of the major provision of the 1991 North-South Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonagression, Exchanges and Cooperation.[297] U.S. negotiators assured Pyongyang that "the improvement of relations with the United States must take place in parallel with the North-South dialogue."[298] Moreover, no other county except South Korea showed a willingness to pay more than half of the four billion dollars to build two LWRs in the North.

Thus, despite North Korea's strenuous efforts to split the United States from its South Korean ally, Washington and South Korea showed a united front against North Korea. At the war memorial in Washington on July 27, 1995, President Clinton promised

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[296]Nigel Holloway and Shim Jae Hoon, "The Price of Peace," Far Eastern Economic Review, August 25, 1994, 14-15.

[297]Scott Snyder, "A Framework for Achieving Reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula: Beyond the Geneva Agreement," Asian Survey 35, no.8, (August 1995): 699-710.

[298]Quoted in the interview with Strobe Talbott, the American Deputy Secretary of State. Nayan Chanda and Nate Thayer, "Snarl Mode," Far Eastern Economic Review, February 9, 1995, 15.

South Korean President Kim that "any further U.S. effort to improve ties with North Korea go forward only if Pyongyang agreed to talks with Seoul." He promised to station 37,000 U.S. troops in South Korea, as long as they were wanted and needed, and he reaffirmed the "central role" of Seoul in the construction of two LWRs in the North. The remaining task was to convince North Korea that "it has no option but to deal directly with the South in its political relations."[299]

B. NORTH KOREAN STRATEGIC ASSUMPTIONS

"We have found that [North Korea] loves a crisis."
—Robert Gallucci, chief U.S. negotiator with North Korea[300]

This section examines how North Korea's political-military strategies contributed to its initiation of the nuclear crisis. It explains that North Korea pursued limited aims/political faits accompli as its main political-military strategy. Brinkmanship and controlled pressure were employed as substrategies. North Korea has adroitly used its latent nuclear weapons program to intimidate "allies that did not want go to war to enforce the NPT regime and were willing to pay billions of dollars to 'buy out' the North's nuclear program."[301]

1. Limited Aims/ Fait Accompli Strategy

The dual nature of the North Korean nuclear program is evident in its objectives: to gain economic concessions from the West, and to develop nuclear weapons.[302] These

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[299]Nigel Holloway, "Fast Friend," Far Eastern Economic Review, August 10, 1995, 22.

[300]Far Eastern Economic Review, April 27, 1995, p.11.

[301]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 278.

[302]Nayan Chanda, "Bomb and Bombast," Far Eastern Economic Review, February 10, 1994, 16-17.

objectives present a dilemma for the United States and its allies. North Korean behavior indicated either "a master diplomacy aimed at extracting concessions from the United States," or a genuine effort to "avoid comprehensive inspections and to acquire nuclear weapons."[303]

Analysts were puzzled about what lay behind North Korea's on-again-off-again approach to international inspections. Some experts believed that North Korea was trying to buy time while it made a few "bombs in the basement." Pyongyang may have possessed a nuclear weapon, or made the West believe that it had one, as the last guarantee for an isolated and declining regime. Therefore, despite Pyongyang's stated willingness to allow inspections, it never gave up its nuclear weapons program. Experts who said that North Korea had developed nuclear weapons as a military deterrent, now view these capabilities as a bargaining chip to achieve assurance about non-use of nuclear weapons, a U.S. guarantee for the survival of the regime, diplomatic recognition, and economic and technical assistance.

Like all sovereign states, North Korea has three major objectives: security, national political well being, and improved economic performance. As a bargaining chip, or as a deterrent the nuclear weapons program helps North Korea achieve these objectives.[304] Andrew Mack concludes as follows:

> The North's dilemma was therefore obvious. To gain the funding it desperately needed to resolve its economic crisis, it had to persuade its critics that it had given up the nuclear option. But abandoning the nuclear option would make it vulnerable to the growing conventional strength of its bitter enemy in Seoul.
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> If, as suggested, Pyongyang saw both the acquisition of nuclear weapons and economic assistance from the outside as vital to its existence, there was only one way to resolve the dilemma. It needed to seek to

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[303]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 232.

[304]Wendt, "North Korean Nuclear Program," 12.

> persuade the outside world that it had abandoned its nuclear project while simultaneously pursuing a clandestine program, albeit at a necessarily reduced level.
>
> If that thesis is correct, we would expect the North to have made a series of concessions on the nuclear issue in the hope that these would satisfy its critics, but we would also expect it to stall on demands that would make a clandestine program hard to keep concealed.[305]

In the early 1990s, when North Korea appeared ready to sign the IAEA safeguard agreement, Pyongyang demanded preconditions from the United States. One was the removal of U.S. nuclear weapons from the South, and the other was a "negative security guarantee" that the United States would not use nuclear weapons against it.[306] This linkage suggests that Pyongyang realized the concern Washington had for the North Korean independent nuclear weapons program, which gave it some bargaining leverage,[307] but also created a real dilemma. The more incentives Seoul and Washington offered, the more North Korea saw the value of delaying negotiations on the nuclear issue to wrench more concessions. North Korea might consider all of these aims attainable: diplomatic recognition, economic benefits, and nuclear bombs, but the latter two are primary objectives for its political faits accompli strategy.[308]

There is evidence that North Korea has tried to develop nuclear bombs. The Russian newspaper *Kommersant* reported that, in early 1992, 56 kilograms of plutonium

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[305]Andrew Mack, "The Nuclear Crisis on the Korean Peninsular," Asian Survey 33, no.4 (April 1993): 349.

[306]Korea Herald, October 10, 1990, p.2.

[307]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 236.

[308]Diplomatic recognition can be easily reversed by the United States and its allies. Also, the North may not want wider diplomatic relations, which could lead to opening the closed nation to western influences. Nonetheless, the North will attempt formal diplomatic relations and try to conclude a separate peace treaty with the United States, since the South didn't sign the armistice that ended in Korean War. Holloway, "Fast Friends." Once a peace treaty is signed, the North can demand, at least technically, the withdrawal of U.S. forces stationed in Korea.

had been smuggled into North Korea in a freight train carrying scrap metal.[309] Pyongyang also tried to employ Russian scientists to build nuclear warheads and delivery systems.[310] In January 1993 the director of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service said that Pyongyang was "on the threshold of developing nuclear bombs" but that the nuclear bomb program had been halted because of "technical problems."[311]

Moreover, the IAEA inspectors found evidence of the North's continuing efforts to build nuclear weapons, including signs of forced entry into the "hot cell" in the Yongbyon reprocessing plant, which was sealed by the inspectors during their last visit to the plant in August 1993. They found that "plutonium was remotely handled in the final stage of its processing into bomb-grade material."[312] In March 1994 the IAEA inspectors found that the North had almost finished a second reprocessing line, which could double its plutonium production capacity. Pyongyang also fabricated a replacement fuel rod for the 30 megawatt reactors and continued production of the fuel for the 200 megawatt reactor.[313]

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[309]Mack, "Nuclear Crisis on the Korean Peninsula," 352.

[310]Daniel Sneider and Wendy Sloane, "The Tail of N. Koreas Nuclear Bid," Christian Science Monitor, June 17, 1994, p.1,4. "Russian officials admit North Korea has been secretly trying to gain Russian aid for its nuclear and missile programs... the North Koreans in 1992 recruited a group of 64 Russian rocket scientists employed at a secret Urals military facility... The group was stopped at the airport in late October 1992 as they were leaving... to work in North Korea.... Among them were specialists in missile design and construction, including "producing the Warheads of nuclear missiles."

[311]Andrew Mack, "Nuclear Crisis on the Korean Peninsula," 353.

[312]The IAEA had not publicly disclosed this particular detail. The broken seal also raises the possibility that Pyongyang has produced more plutonium than assumed. CIA Director James Woolsey said: "our best estimate in the intelligence community is that they [the North Koreans] have diverted enough material, more likely than not, to manufacture at least one weapon." Far Eastern Economic Review, March 31, 1994, 14-15; the CIA and KGB agree that the North has developed at least two "low yield" atomic explosives, which are "capable of obliterating everything within a three-quarter-mile radius." Safire, "Clinton's Concessions".

[313]Sanger, "North Korea said to Block Taking of Radioactive Samples from site," New York Times, March 16, 1994.

In June 1994, after Carter's visit to Pyongyang, North Korea agreed to temporarily freeze its nuclear program, and to resume a third round of high level talks in Geneva. By July 1994, North Korea was winning the game. "It had reengaged the United States in high-level talks on its terms; and it had not foreclosed its nuclear weapons option, since the highly radioactive fuel rods needed to cool before they could be reprocessed and the plutonium extracted."[314]

The Agreed Framework, signed in October 1994, was the result of North Korea's continued efforts to achieve political faits accompli, economic gains, and nuclear weapons development. The agreement provided substantial economic benefits, including two light-water reactors, valued at $4 billion, and millions of dollars of oil, not to mention the opportunity to open diplomatic relations with United States and its allies.[315] Moreover, North Korea could keep its allegedly developed nuclear explosives. The Agreed Framework did not require North Korea to accept IAEA special inspections immediately. Instead, it freezes North Korea's weapons program until well beyond the year 2000—in effect, accepting the one or two nuclear explosives it may already have as a fait accompli.

2. Brinkmanship and Controlled Pressure Strategies

North Korea has deliberately employed brinkmanship and controlled pressure as supporting strategies to accomplish its two main objectives: economic gain and nuclear weapons. Pyongyang used these strategies to "generate new bargaining leverage by raising Washington's fears about a new nuclear weapon state and a full-blown international crisis,

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[314]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 273.

[315]North Korean suspicion that South Korea might back out of the deal prompted the DPRK to request, and President Clinton to send a letter, dated October 20, 1994, to reassure Pyongyang: "In the event that this reactor project is not completed for reasons beyond the control of the DPRK, I will use the full powers of my office to provide... such a project from the United States, subject to the approval of the U.S. Congress." See Steven Greenhouse, "Clinton, in Letter, Assures North Koreans on Nuclear Reactors," New York Times, October 27, 1994.

as well as about the erosion of the NPT regime and the IAEA safeguards system."[316] The North's withdrawal from the NPT in March 1993 and its unmonitored unloading of reactor fuel in May-June 1994, were the two most prominent examples.

On March 12, 1993, North Korea gave three months' notice, in accordance with NPT procedures, that it was withdrawing from the treaty.[317] On the same day, it threatened to adopt a strong defensive countermeasure if sanctions were imposed. As Mitchell Reiss noted,

> North Korea was playing a high-stakes *game of nuclear brinkmanship* and seemed to have gauged the situation perfectly. It had generated substantial bargaining leverage for itself. It gambled that the importance the international community, especially the United States, attached to the NPT would force Washington and Seoul to begin addressing the North's agenda of political and economic issues. Insisting on special inspections and clarifying "inconsistencies" in the North Korean nuclear program had now become secondary to keeping Pyongyang in the treaty.[318]

Pyongyang may have used the threat of withdrawal from the NPT as a means of testing the commitments of Washington and Seoul. A weak or conciliatory response from the United States or South Korea would have been a valuable lesson to North Korea. Whatever its motivations, North Korea had nothing to lose except a vague promise of economic aid and release from self-imposed isolation.[319]

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[316]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 281.

[317]Article 10(1) of the NPT states that each party shall have the right to withdraw from the NPT "if it decides that extraordinary events, related to the subject matter of this treaty, have jeopardized the supreme interests of its country." see "Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons", in Spector, Nuclear Ambitions, "Appendix D", 428.

[318]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 251.

[319]Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 107, "emphasis added."

The North also employed a controlled pressure strategy when it insisted on splitting IAEA Inspections into two categories: inspections for verifying the continuity of safeguards, and inspections for determining the history of the nuclear program. This time Pyongyang restricted the IAEA's rights to inspect facilities under the treaty. In May-June 1994 North Korea informed the IAEA that it intended to refuel the 30 megawatt reactor "at an early date," meaning that the nuclear fuel would soon be removed. It would allow inspectors to observe and count the fuel rods as they were removed, but inspectors would not be able to take samples for testing. The United States was faced with a choice between bending the rules and completely losing North Korean cooperation. The alternative would be to let North Korea reload fuel without an IAEA observation, which meant that all the historical records would be lost forever.[320] Whether or not it had a workable nuclear weapons program, North Korea's ambiguous posture created significant bargaining power.

By mid-1993 North Korea had won three tactical victories. First, high-level talks with the United States made a move toward the goal of diplomatic recognition. Second, the IAEA had been marginalized, since Pyongyang would negotiate safeguards inspections with Washington, not the agency. And third, the North-South bilateral inspection regime was dead. The North could speak directly to Washington and use "this channel to try to play the sometimes competing interests of the United States, South Korea, and the IAEA against each other to its own advantage."[321]

North Korea also used the threat of crisis escalation to keep Washington and Seoul from taking strong measures against it. In January 1994 the IAEA and North Korea

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[320]As Leonard S. Spector notes what Washington had there was "blackmail." Nayan Chanda, "Forgive and Forget?" Far Eastern Economic Review, May 12, 1994, 14-15.

[321]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 233.

resumed discussions of procedural details. North Korea appeared to delay the IAEA inspection by repeatedly requesting additional information abut what precisely the IAEA intended to do. Frustrated with these delays, the United States announced, on January 31, that it planned to resume Team Spirit if Pyongyang did not permit inspections. North Korea accused the United States of breaking its promises and threatened to renounce all the goodwill measures and commitments the North had taken so far.[322] When the North-South talks, which resumed at Panmunjom on March 19, North Korean delegates, partly angered by South Korean insistence on a complete accession to its draft, walked out of the meeting and threatened: "Seoul is not very far from here. If a war broke out, it will be a sea of fire."[323]

In early 1995, North Korea was furious with U.S. and South Korean proposals to link the reopening of North-South dialogue with the progress of the Agreed Framework. Pyongyang warned that "if the U.S. values the DPRK-U.S. framework agreement and implements it, we will welcome it. If it refuses to do so, we will do the same."[324]

3. Analysis

In summary, North Korea's political-military strategies support the assertion of Hypothesis 1:

The possibility of political challenge is high if a weaker state's decision-maker believes in the efficacy of a successful limited aims/fait accompli strategy.

To sustain its regime, the North needed economic aid from the West and security guarantees, both foreign and domestic. Nuclear weapons, as a bargaining tool or a means

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[322]R. Jeffrey Smith, "N. Korea Denounces U.S. plan to install Missile Interceptors," Washington Post, February 2, 1994.

[323]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 266.

[324]"Future of Agreement depends on U.S.," Pyongyang Times, February 25, 1995, p.8.

of deterrence, were a more effective means of achieving these aims than using diplomatic methods. Pyongyang pursued limited aims exclusive of diplomatic recognition because, once obtained, economic benefits and nuclear weapons are easier to retain as a fait accompli.

To achieve its limited aims, the North created a shared nuclear crisis through brinkmanship and controlled pressure to manipulate the reluctance of the US-ROK alliance to escalate the crisis. Pyongyang's announcement of NPT withdrawal in March 1993, and its unmonitored unloading of the 30 megawatt reactor fuel in May-June 1994 were two prominent examples. The Agreed Framework was a diplomatic victory,[325] because it clearly failed to establish whether Pyongyang's resistance to inspection was intended to hide a nuclear weapons program or a bluff to achieve broader economic and political goals. While the U.S. $4 billion aid package to North Korea might have diffused the crisis, the question of covert nuclear program could not be fully discounted.[326]

C. NORTH KOREA'S CHANGING CAPABILITIES

This section examines how North Korea's offensive and deterrent military capabilities contributed to its decision to initiate a political challenge. Because military power is closely related to other national power resources, including economic, demographic, and technical strength, this section surveys these factors in addition to the North's military capability.[327] North Korea's economic and conventional military

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[325]Kang Sok Ju, head of North Korean delegations for nuclear negotiations, praised the Framed Agreement as "a milestone in the settlement of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsular and a document of historical significance." "Milestone for Nuclear Settlement on Korean peninsula," Pyongyang Times, October 29, 1994, p.1.

[326]Richard Latter, "The Proliferation of Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons," 16.

[327]The Connection between military power and economic growth has been addressed by many scholars. For example, Robert Gilpin argued that "economic growth and demographic change are among the most important forces underlying international political change," however, the influence of economic

capabilities are declining which, in turn, influences on its nuclear policy. Even though the North's conventional military capability is potent enough to deter U.S. and South Korean attempts to employ sanctions and military measures, it seeks a nuclear weapon as a strategic equalizer to compensate for its declining conventional weapons capability.

1. North Korea's Declining Capability

The North Korean military is designed to both protect the nation and "maintain the option for militarily reunifying the peninsula if conditions favor a quick victory [through surprise attack.]"[328] Almost all aspects of the economy and society revolve around defense-related programs. Since the rivalry between the two Koreas began in 1945 until the mid-1960s, the North enjoyed economic superiority over South Korea.[329] The South Korean economy, however, soon surpassed that of North Korea and maintained sustained economic growth.

As a result, South Korea overwhelmed the North in major national power resources. (see Table 1) South Korea's gross national product (GNP) for 1992 ($311.3 billion) was almost fourteen times that of North Korea's GNP for 1992 ($22.4 billion). The South's GNP per capita in 1992 ($7052) was seven times the North's of $1011, whose economic growth rates are declining rapidly (-5.2 percent in 1991 and -6.7 percent in 1992), while the South Korean economy grew rapidly (8.4 percent in 1991 and 4.8 percent in 1992).[330] In addition, South Korea has almost twice the population of North Korea (43,966,000 to 22,728,000).

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change on military power was accumulative and only felt over a period of decades. Robert Gilpin, War and Change in World Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 55-75.

[328]Defense Intelligence Agency, North Korea: The Foundations for Military Strength, 1991, 2. Sung-Hack Kang, "Strategic Metamorphosis from Sisyphus to Chameleon ? North Korean Security Policy and Military Strategy," The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis 7, no.1, (Summer 1995): 203-210.

[329]Macdonald, The Koreans, 221-228.

[330]International Insititute for Strategic Studeies (IISS), The Military Balance, 1993-1994 (London: IISS, 1993), 159 and 161.Today, the North Korean economy can no longer feed its people. The situation is

Because of its economic preponderance, South Korea can easily outspend North Korea in defense expenditures. From 1978 to 1988, South Korea's defense spending averaged $5.8 billion. North Korea recorded $5.9 billion; however, defense spending severely burdened the North Korean economy. North Korean military spending was estimated at over 20 percent of its gross national product (GNP), while South Korea's total varied between 4.3 percent and 6.2 percent.[331] North Korea's totalitarian rule enables it to continue to appropriate large percentages of GNP for military spending. Thus, it can maintain large, and somewhat modern, forces.

Since 1989, however, South Korean defense expenditures almost doubled that of North Korea, and they amounted to a smaller percentage of its GNP. In 1992, South Korea allocated about 3.7 percent of its GNP to defense, compared with about 25 percent allocated by the North. The South's military budget (11.64 billion) is double that of the North (5.62 billion). Seoul has also invested over 30 percent of its defense expenditure in force modernization since 1986.[332] South Korea's total value of imported arms from 1991 to 1993 was $1.8 billion, while that of North Korea was only $105 million during the same period.[333] Considering South Korea's economic power and its efforts toward self defense, "North Korea's superiority over South in conventional weapons will be reversed in the near future."[334]

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so bad that "everybody in the North is convinced that there's no way out of economic difficulties short of profound policy changes," said one North Korean defector who recently fled to South Korea. Shim Jae Hoon, The image Cracks," Far Eastern Economic Review, February 29, 1996, 14-15.

[331] World Military Expenditure and Arms Transfers, 1993-1994, 50.

[332] The Ministry National Defense, Republic of Korea, Defense White Paper, 1993-1994, 183.

[333] World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1993-1994, 141.

[334] Young-Sun Song, "The Korean Nuclear Issue," 475.

Internal economic hardships, however, have not deterred North Korea from developing a relatively modern Army of 1 million soldiers supported by a Navy of 45,000 (with over 400 combat vessels) and an Air Force of 82,000 (with over 700 jet combat aircraft[335] (see Table 2). North Korea also has the largest Special Operations Force in the world.[336] Moreover, North Korea has the capacity to produce a variety of offensive chemical and biological weapons, and has already stockpiled 1000 tons of chemical weapons.[337]

Technology is another important resource for national power. In industrial technology, South Korea clearly enjoys superiority over North Korea. In terms of military technology, both Koreas can manufacture their own heavy artillery, tanks, submarines, and even combat airplanes.[338] Both Koreas can also produce ballistic missiles. North Korea has succeeded in a flight test of the 1,000-1,300km range, mobile No-dong 1 and is developing two other missiles, Taep'o-dong 1 and Taep'o-dong 2, that have a potential ranges of 2,000 km and over 3,500 km respectively. These missiles considerably enhance North Korea's offensive capability. South Korea is also one of a few countries that have the necessary financial, technological and human resources for

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[335]North Korea enlarged its armed forces over one million in 1989 when its economy was seriously declining. (see TABLE 1) The North's numerical preponderance over the South has been a significant threat to both South Korea and U.S. forces in Korea.

[336]Defense Intelligence Agency, North Korea, 50

[337]Pyongyang considers these chemical and biological weapons as a key part of its offensive strategy, which calls for a "one-blow, non-stop" assault to conquer the entire Korean peninsula before the U.S and the world can react. see Joseph S. Bermudez Jr, "North Korea's Chemical and Biological Warfare Arsenal," Jane's Intelligence Review 5, no.5 (May 1993): 225-228.

[338]According to a recent defector, Lt-Col. Choe Ju Hwal, "North Korea is adding regular troops—more than 100,000 men and women—to its 1.2 million armed forces. It is now focusing on producing MIG-21 combat aircraft, helicopters and T-62 Russian model tanks." Shim Jae Hoon, "Empty Driver's Seat," Far Eastern Economic Review, October 26, 1995. South Korea is producing Type 209 submarines, F-16 aircrafts, and Type 88 tanks. Greg J. Gerardi and James A. Lamson, "Arming East Asia," in The World in Conflict 1994/95 by Jane's Intelligence Review: 102-106; International Defense Review, November 1995, 21.

producing long-range ballistic missiles (1000 km or more).[339] One thing that needs to be mentioned here, however, is that the South has more technically advanced firepower. While the North has clear superiority in sheer numbers, North Korean-made equipment does not approach the quality of South Korean produced armaments.[340] Moreover, its organization is "ill-suited" to perform well in crises.[341] Therefore, considering economic and technological factors, North Korean military encounters the danger of losing to South Korean armed forces in terms of both quantity and certainly quality in foreseeable future.

2. Role of North Korea's Military Capability in Nuclear Policy

The declining capability of the North Korean military has two important influences on Pyongyang's nuclear policy. First, the North may have sought nuclear weapons as a "strategic equalizer" to compensate for its declining military power,[342] because it could no longer afford to modernize its defense forces. Second, even with its declining capability the North Korean military strongly supports Pyongyang's foreign policy. The North's potential offensive capability, a combination of many conventional weapons, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and long range delivery systems nullified U.S. and South Korean threats. In early 1994, the Clinton Administration, frustrated by Pyongyang's refusal to accept IAEA safeguard inspections, called for UN sanctions. What Pyongyang would do then was anybody's guess. North Korea threatened

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[339]Keith B. Payne, "Ballistic Missile proliferation," in The World in Conflict 1994/95 by Jane's Intelligence Review, 20-25. South Korea, however, does not produce long range ballistic missiles. The U.S. persuaded Seoul to abandon its missile project. Instead, Washington permitted Seoul's access to other wide ranges of advanced technology. Janne E. Nolan, Trappings of Power: Ballistic missiles in the Third World (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1991), 48-52.

[340]Stuart K. Masaki, "The Korean Question: Assessing the Military Balance," Security Study 4, no.2 (Winter 1994/95): 365-425.

[341]Paul Bracken, "Nuclear Weapons and State Survival in North Korea," Survival 35, no.3 (Autumn 1993): 142-145.

[342]Mack, "Nuclear Crisis on the Korean Peninsular," 341.

that America's call for sanctions would "mean outright war."[343] "That was why the United States desperately wanted to avoid backing the North into a corner and forcing a confrontation."[344] One Pentagon source reported that the Pentagon's computer simulation of a new Korean War showed "the South's defense collapsing so fast the hair stood up on the back of our necks as we watched. On the first run, we thought the computer must have made a mistake. But we ran the model again and again with the same result each time: collapse."[345]

The North's offensive military capability also deterred the allies from a preemptive military strike on its nuclear facility. For the United States, the cost of preemptive strikes were too expensive to bear. In January 1994 during a strategy session at the White House, President Clinton received a report from the CIA that, in addition to potential nuclear capability, the North has a ballistic missile capable of reaching Japan. The Pentagon reported that, to defeat the North Korean nuclear threat, the U.S. military would need to move 500,000 troops, several thousand tanks and armored vehicles, and hundreds of warplanes to South Korea. The President's mood after the session was described as "somber."[346]

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[343]"Will Kim Risk a War?" News Week, June 20, 1994, 48.

[344]Bill Powell and John Barry, "Public Enemy Number One," News Week, November 29, 1993, 44-45.

[345]Defense analysts in Seoul reject this conclusion. They argue that the superior allied air power would not allow such a quick strike by the North, and Pyongyang may not have enough fuel to launch such a blitzkrieg because of its devastating economic situation. Bill Powell and John Barry, "Public Enemy Number One," 45; Another analyst says that North Korea's military is not able to perform an organized attack because of its poor command and control system and lack of logistic base. Also, North Korea's road network north of the DMZ does not have the capacity to allow concentration of large forces. See Bracken, "Nuclear Weapons and State Survival in North Korea," 142-145; Nevertheless, this computer simulation alarmed Washington and Seoul. Both considered North Korean threats of using military as its genuine intention.

[346]Kenneth R. Timmerman, "Going Ballistic," 12-15.

Further, a preemptive strike would risk a second Korean war. A 1992 RAND study for the Defense Department recommended preemptive military strikes against DPRK nuclear facilities only if South Korea and the United States were "willing and able to wage a full-scale war against North Korea."[347] Classified Pentagon planning estimates revealed that such a war would result in an estimated 300,000 to 500,000 military casualties in the first ninety days. No figures were given for civilian deaths.[348] Moreover, a preemptive strike might invite the possibility of a nuclear response from Pyongyang. But even conventional attacks on South Korea's nuclear power stations could be devastating, scattering deadly radioactivity throughout the region. Thus, preemptive military action would be vehemently opposed by South Korea and Japan.[349] Only military defeat, occupation, and inspection of the entire country would eliminate the North's nuclear weapons program. Consequently, diplomacy was the only option available for Washington and Seoul.

3. Analysis

Pyongyang's offensive military capability successfully deterred U.S. and South Korean efforts to employ sanctions and military strikes against North Korea. North Korea's use of its military capability as a foreign policy tool confirms the arguments of Hypothesis 2:

The possibility of political challenge is high if a weaker state gains enough offensive or deterrent capability that can inflict significant costs on the strong adversary, thus rendering bargaining leverage to the weaker state.

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[347]Kong-Dan Oh, "Background and Options for Nuclear Arms Control on the Korean Peninsula," RAND Note N-3475-USDP (1992), 25; quoted in Masaki, "The Korean Question."

[348]R. Jeffery Smith, "North Korea Deal Urged by State Dept.," Washington Post, November 15, 1993.

[349]For a discussion of the limitations of the military option, see Taewoo Kim, "South Korea's Nuclear Dilemmas," 267-71.

However, the North's offensive and deterrent capabilities do not explain the specific timing of the initiation of its nuclear crisis. If offensive capability is the only cause for these challenges, Pyongyang could have initiated them at any time because North Korea's numerical military superiority over the South has been maintained since the division of the peninsula.

D. NORTH KOREA'S CHANGING DOMESTIC POLITICS

This section analyzes how North Korea's domestic politics affects its decision to initiate a political challenge. It explains three related findings. First, the North Korean nuclear crisis was the result of conflicts between two decision-making groups, hard-liners and pragmatists. Second, Kim Jung-Il used the country's potential nuclear capability to compensate for his political vulnerability. Third, North Korea viewed nuclear weapons as means to promote the regime's legitimacy and sustain its survival.

1. Divergence in North Korea's Decision-Making Groups

The North Korean decision-making process is governed by two groups: hard-liners and pragmatists. The hard-liners seem to be the primary supporters of nuclear weapons as a symbol of the country's independence and an ultimate means for regime survival. The pragmatists view nuclear weapons as an obstacle to better relations with the West, and were ready to give them up for the right price.[350]

Selig S. Harrison argues that Kim Il-Sung was in firm control of both moderates and hard-liners in the central committee of the ruling party, "but his regime is not monolithic." As Harrison puts it,

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[350]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 247. For divergence of North Korean decision-making groups see also Alexander Zhebin, "North Korea after Kim Il Sung: Hard Choices," The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis 7, no.1 (Summer 1995): 212-217.

> Hard-liners in the armed forces and nuclear establishment compete for his favor with more cosmopolitan young party leaders and technocrats. ... the moderates won out in a struggle over nuclear policy in December 1991. The Central Committee decided to test whether it could win quid pro quos from the U.S. and Japan—diplomatic recognition, economic help and a pledge not to use nuclear weapons first in Korea—if it agreed to International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards and admitted inspection.[351]

Nonetheless, by the beginning of 1993, moderates could not prove the soundness of their strategy. The United States did not remove its nuclear umbrella from South Korea, and the planned U.S. troop reductions had been postponed. The talks between the two Koreas had broken down, the IAEA demanded tougher inspections, and Team Spirit '93 was going forward. North Korea could not normalize relations with either Japan or the United States while South Korea established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and China. Moreover, Japan, the United States, and South Korea demanded that the North commit to a bilateral inspection regime and allow IAEA inspections as the conditions for diplomatic normalization and financial assistance. North Korea suspected that, even if these issues could be settled, others, such as ballistic missile exports, chemical weapons, and human rights would follow. From the North's point of view, the accomplishment of its objectives remained as distant as ever.[352]

There is evidence that the North's nuclear policy is the result of conflicts between hard-liners and moderates. North Korea reported to the IAEA in early 1993 that it would pull the core from the 30 megawatt reactor in April 1993, and it agreed to let the IAEA conduct an isotopic examination of the fuel rods. Why did North Korea pull the fuel at this time? One possible answer is that "pulling the fuel satisfied the agendas of both the

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[351] Selig S. Harrison, "3 Myths May Foil Progress," New York Times, June 24, 1994, p.A27.

[352] Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 248.

'soft-liners' and the 'hard-liners' in North Korea at the time. The soft-liners hoped that this action would get Washington's attention and force them back to the negotiation table. The hard-liners could support this action because it would move the North one step closer to acquiring material for nuclear weapons."[353]

In 1994, when the nuclear crisis was becoming critical, a more intense struggle took place between hard-liners and moderates. Harrison notes that

> In March, [1994] hard-liners in the Atomic, Energy Ministry blocked inspectors from access to key parts of the reprocessing plant at Yongbyon. But in early May, moderates won a policy reversal and inspectors returned with full access. In late May, hard-liners pushed through the unloading of the fuel rods in the five-megawatt reactor at Yongbyon before agreement had been reached with the (IAEA) on inspection process.[354]

2. Nuclear Policy as a Means for the Leader's Legitimacy

North Korea's latent nuclear capability was used to compensate for the political vulnerability of its leader, Kim Jung-Il. During the 1970s, North Korea planned the succession of power from Kim Il-Sung to his son, Kim Jung-Il. The primary challenge for a Kim Jung-Il regime would be legitimacy.[355] The shortcomings of the younger Kim are believed to be "lack of political legitimacy, poor governing skills, and the absence of a military background."[356] Kim Jung-Il has been described as "slovenly and unpopular" and his character is said to be extreme, unpredictable, irresponsible, and paranoid.[357]

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[353]Ibid., 311-312, footnotes.

[354]Selig S. Harrison, "3 Myths May Foil," p. 27.

[355]Tony Emerson, "The Mystery Man," Newsweek, April 20, 1992, 22-26.

[356]Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 30-31.

[357]"North Korea," Jane's Defense Weekly, Global Update (August 1994): 4-7; Shim Jae Hoon, "Empty Driver's Seat," Far Eastern Economic Review, October 26, 1995.

One thing is clear; the younger Kim lacks his father's charisma and personal authority. His father fought against both the Japanese and the Americans. He built a country based on perpetual revolution, demanding endless sacrifices from the North Korean people. The country are sustained by both fear and faith. As a novice leader, Kim Jung-Il can summon the fear, but he still has to prove that he can stimulate the faith.[358] Mazarr noted as follows:

> In order to benefit Kim Jung-Il's standing, therefore, the drive for the bomb would have to be combined with adroit international bargaining, ostensibly under the younger Kim's control, to make that nuclear arsenal work to the North's benefit. Kim Jung-Il would thus be seen as the leader who could use the threat of a nuclear arsenal to preserve the North Korean regime. North Korea's stubborn back and forth diplomacy of 1993, with its demand for ever-greater concessions and its threat of war, has all the hallmarks of such an approach, and occurred just at a time when the formal transfer of power between the Kims was nearly at hand.[359]

North Korea officially announced that Kim Jung-Il had defended the North's dignity from threats on its sovereignty. All key policy statements issued during the crisis came with Kim Jung-Il's signature.[360] South Korean Foreign Minister Han Sung Joo noted that "this has all been Kim Jung-Il's game. Everything has been in his name. And all the other indications are that he has been responsible for the decisions."[361] Since his father's death in July 1994, the younger Kim has failed either to take full control of the military or to hold the regime's top political posts. Top army generals are reportedly keeping Kim from taking full control of the party and government.[362] Tough nuclear diplomacy with a

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[358]Bill Powell, "Headless Beast: North Korea After Kim," Newsweek, July 18, 1994 23.

[359]Quoted in Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 31.

[360]Ibid., 106.

[361]David Sanger, "Son of North Korean Leader May Be Succeeding to Power," New York Times, March 25, 1993, A10.

[362]Shim Jae Hoon, "Empty Driver's Seat."

strong power like the United States, while excluding South Korea from the negotiations, would be a great political advantage for Kim Jung-Il to preserve popular support and stabilize his legitimacy as the leader.

3. Nuclear Policy as a Means for the Regime Survival

North Korea might also view nuclear weapons as a means to bolster the regime's legitimacy and sustain its survival. According to defectors, there is discontent in the countryside over food shortages and the failing economy. One recent defector said that the economic and social conditions are so desperate that "many people and soldiers want an outright war with the South just to see how it would change their miserable lives."[363] Another said "we do know that war would be a disaster. But with or without war, we don't think the situation would be any different."[364] However, the idea that Kim Il-Sung's regime had built a nuclear bomb rallied the spirits of North Korea's armed forces. "Officers and soldiers of the people's army are proud of one thing,... even under such terrible conditions: the development of nuclear and chemical weapons. Almost the entire People's Army believes that North Korea already possesses nuclear weapons. The People's Army is confident that North Korea will use them in an emergency."[365]

Moreover, North Korea faces a danger of dissolution. "What is at stake in North Korea is not merely the survival of the Kim regime, but of the state itself—that is, government institutions, as well as the country's present social structure."[366] The

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[363]Lt. Colonel Choe Ju Hwal is one of the highest-ranking officers to have defected from the North. Shim Jae Hoon, "Empty Driver's Seat."

[364]Pak Young Kil was a North Korean chemical plant worker. He escaped the North in August 1993 and arrived in South Korea by way of China in October 1993. William Branigin, "Defector Says Many N. Koreans Think War Could Improve Their Lot," Washington Post, July 7, 1994, A14.

[365]Yim Yong Sun, a former lieutenant in Korean People's Army. Cited in Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 101.

[366]Bracken, "Nuclear Weapons and State Survival in North Korea," 147.

problem is that this crisis of the North becomes "a crisis for its neighbors through the mechanism of Pyongyang's military institutions." The North uses its potential nuclear capability, together with conventional military power and other WMDs, to maintain its existence.[367]

Pyongyang may have been encouraged to invent new nuclear strategies because of changes in the threats to its security since the late 1980s. As Paul Bracken argued, North Korea's relatively strong military capabilities are not useful against the kind of security threats that it faces now. The threat to North Korea is not military one, "but strategic isolation, leading to an increased sense of economic isolation and opening door to new opportunities for outside political intervention."[368] To survive as a state, Pyongyang must reduce its isolation and obtain western help for its devastated economy. Thus, diplomatic recognition and economic concessions from the west are necessary for survival.

4. Analysis

The interactions between North Korean nuclear policies and its domestic politics confirms the argument of Hypothesis 3:

The possibility of political challenge is high if the power structure changes in a weak state and when a militaristic group with little legitimacy assumes control of the decision-making process.

The North's domestic politics clearly influenced its nuclear policy. First, the decision-making process was not unilateral. The North's decision to withdraw from the NPT, unload fuel rods from the reactor, and link the IAEA inspection with considerable concessions from the United States were the result of competition between moderates and hard-liners. This does not mean that these decisions were the unpredictable result of

[367]Paul Bracken, "Risks and Promises in the Two Koreas," Orbis 39, no.1, (Winter 1995): 55-64.

[368]Bracken, "Nuclear Weapons and State Survival in North Korea," 48-49.

fighting between these groups; on the contrary, the decisions that caused the crisis were highly calculated by the North Korean decision-makers.

Second, the nuclear weapons program was used as a means to consolidate Kim Jung-Il's leadership and enhance his personal legitimacy. The North's high-handedness in negotiations with the United States and South Korea could be viewed as a dramatic power play designed to rally the people and the military around Kim Jung-Il.[369] Next, an impending crisis with strong foreign powers would reduce unsatisfied voices from factions opposing Kim Jung-Il, and might direct the people's attention away from economic difficulties.

Finally, the North's nuclear policy was a means for consolidating the regime's legitimacy. Since the late 1980s, the latent nuclear capability has become an ultimate means for regime survival. North Korea's potential nuclear weapons capability became a spiritual rallying point when the country's overall social and economic conditions were declining. In sum, the argument of Hypothesis 3 was well supported by the case of the North Korean nuclear crisis.

E. NORTH KOREA'S CHANGING ALLIANCES

This section examines the connection between support from a stronger power and its impact on North Korea's motivations for political challenge. It surveys three regional powers, Russia, China, and Japan, and examines their willingness to support Pyongyang in a crisis by surveying alliance relations, and economic and military ties between them. The results show that, during the crisis, North Korea was relatively isolated by two strong supporters that it had relied on in the Cold War era. Both China and Russia basically agreed with the interests of the United States and its allies in nonproliferation on

[369]Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 106.

the Korean peninsula. But China opposed harsh measures, such as sanctions, which indirectly helped the North politically challenge the United States.

During the Cold War, North Korea cultivated relations with its two communist allies, both for support of its military posture and for armaments.[370] Both China and the Soviet Union considered North Korea strategically important in the context of the global confrontation between the West and East. The end of the Cold War, however, significantly diminished the importance of their relations. When both China and Russia opened diplomatic relations with South Korea, it further belittled the position of North Korea.

1. Russia and North Korea

The relationship between North Korea and the Soviet Union began with the creation of North Korea in 1948. The Soviet Union recognized the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) as "the only legitimate representative" of the Korean people.[371] The relationship deteriorated in 1962 when Krushechev demanded payment in rubles for weaponry supplied to North Korea, and Moscow refused to upgrade the North's armaments.[372] Moscow did not approve of Pyongyang's "independent" foreign policy, especially the unpredictable and adventurous characteristics that became evident during the Pueblo crisis in 1968. Disturbed by Pyongyang's behavior, Moscow distanced itself from the North.[373]

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[370]Macdonald, The Koreans, 256.

[371]For the history of diplomatic relations between the DPRK and the USSR, see Alexander Zhebin, "Russia and North Korea: An Emerging, Uneasy Partnership," Asian Survey 34, no.8, (August 1995): 726-739.

[372]In 1962 the North began to build up its defense industry for self-sufficiency. Macdonald, The Koreans, 83,255.

[373]Vadim P. Tkachenko, "Lessons of the Pueblo Crisis," Korean Journal of the Defense Analysis Y, no.2 (Winter 1993); 233.

Moscow and Pyongyang improved relations in 1984 when Kim Il-Sung visited the Soviet Union. This reconciliation was achieved because both countries needed each other. North Korea was lagging behind South Korea in political, economic, and military competition, and it needed Soviet help, especially to compete with the South's military modernization. The Soviet Union was facing an unfriendly China and the possibility of another anti-Soviet military alliance emerging in Asia—the United States, Japan, and South Korea.[374] The emergence of the Cold War made Moscow eager to seek its old ally again, and it provided MIG-23s, MIG-29s, SU-25s, and modern air defense systems to the North, who agreed to Moscow's overflight rights and access to North Korean ports for naval use.

The relations with the Soviets weakened again after Gorbachev's domestic reforms and Moscow's opening of diplomatic relations with Seoul in September 1990. Moscow did not support North Korea's nuclear ambition and, urged by Washington, it pressured North Korea to join the NPT in 1985. Russia probably valued international nonproliferation more highly than did the US because it would not want to see a precedent set that could undermine its effort to eliminate Ukrainian nuclear weapons.[375] It generally followed the U.S. lead on the matters, if it did not appear to undermine the NPT.

During his visit to Seoul in November 1992, Yeltsin vowed that Russia would halt all military aid to North Korea and that the 1961 Russia-DPRK defense pact, which provided automatic intervention in the case of war, should be either canceled or dramatically revised. "We do not intend to render such military assistance," Yeltsin

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[374]Zhebin, "Russia and North Korea," 727-730.

[375]Wendt, "North Korean Nuclear Program," 20.

said.[376] In February 1993 Russian Foreign Minister Kunadze traveled to Pyongyang and informed the North that Moscow would no longer honor the military component of the 1961 Soviet-DPRK Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation.[377] Russia's decision not to renew its 1961 treaty with the DPRK led to a closer relationship with South Korea. Seoul agreed to take Russian-made advanced weaponry in partial settlement of a U.S. $1.56 billion debt incurred by the former Soviet Union.[378]

Pyongyang's diplomatic break with Russia meant the loss of its major source of advanced weaponry. Moscow accounted for almost 93 percent or $2.2 billion of the total $2.37 billion in arms transfers to North Korea from 1984 to 1988 (See Table 3). The situation was aggravated further after 1990. North Korea acquired $105 million worth of weaponry from Russia, while South Korea procured $1.81 *billion*, more than seventeen times that amount. Future arms transfers from Russia to the North may be negligible if this trend continues. North Korea, which has little foreign exchange, does not display interest toward the Russian weaponry exporters.[379] Trade between Russia and South Korea also has grown considerably, from $1.2 billion in 1991 to $1.57 billion in 1993.[380]

2. China and North Korea

China's forces aided the North's defeated army during the Korean War in 1950, but this close alliance relationship has been constrained in recent years. The relationship was severely aggravated in 1969, when armies of the DPRK and China clashed at the

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[376]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 243.

[377]Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 96.

[378]The Weapons include T-80Us, BMP-3 IFVs, and several missiles, "Korea Ponders Future Tank Plans," 21.

[379]Vasily V. Mikheev, "New Soviet Approaches to North Korea: A Problem of Morality in Foreign Policy," Korea and World Affairs 15, no.3 (Fall 1991): 448.

[380]Charles E. Ziegler. "Russia in the Asia-Pacific: A Major Power or Minor Participant," Asian Survey 34, no.6 (June 1994): 538-539.

border. Soon after, however, the two countries restored their relationship and have coexisted peacefully since then.[381] A defining element of DPRK foreign policy during the Cold War years was its effort to balance China against the Soviet Union, while maintaining diplomatic independence and receiving support from both.[382] This diplomatic maneuvering worked relatively well, but ended with the end of the Cold War.

Like Russia, China formulated policy toward North Korea on the basis of a cost/benefit analysis, emphasizing "state to state" ties, economic relations, and national interest rather than any obligations to the North's regime based on history or ideology.[383] On August 24, 1992, China and South Korea established diplomatic relations. Beijing reportedly told the North that a formal diplomatic relationship with the South would not affect their 1961 friendship and cooperation agreement, but Pyongyang would have to abandon its nuclear weapons development program.[384]

China's relations with the North have been affected by the rapidly improving Sino-South Korean relations. In December 1992 China ended most of its barter trade with North Korea and insisted on cash payment for goods. [385] By 1994, South Korea was China's sixth largest trading partner, and the trade volume between them was twenty times larger than between China and North Korea.[386] China had little interest, if any, in

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[381]Nicholas Eberstadt, "China's Trade with the DPRK, 1990-1994: Pyongyang's Thrifty New Patron," Korea and World Affairs 19, no.4 (Winter 1995): 669.

[382]Macdonald, The Koreans, 260.

[383]Banning Garrett and Bonnie Glaser, "Looking Across the Yalu: Chinese Assessment of North Korea," Asian Survey 35, no.6 (June 1995): 539-543.

[384]FBIS-EAS-92-166 (August 26, 1992), p.11. Pyongyang, with China as its only remaining ally, refrained from any public criticism of China-South Korea relations, but responded by opening a trading company office in Taiwan. Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 294, footnote.

[385]Nicholas D. Kristof, "Cash Only, No Battering, China Tells North Koreans," New York Times, December 30, 1992.

[386]Eberstadt, "China's trade with the DPRK," 670.

North Korea in terms of economic relations and, thus, North Korea's political leverage with Beijing correspondingly diminished.

On the security issue, China showed ambiguous positions toward North Korea. China certainly did not want a nuclear-armed neighbor, but it also desired to minimize any risk of instability from an intense confrontation. China considers "North Korea as a small power whose significance lies primarily in its potentially destabilizing behavior" that could endanger its broader interests of maintaining stability for economic development and strengthening economic and political ties with regional powers, including South Korea.[387] Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen said that "there should be no nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula, whether in the North or the South," but he argued that "dialogue is more effective than pressure" in achieving that goal.[388] The Chinese reportedly told Kim Il-Sung of their opposition to nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula when Kim visited China in October 1991.[389]

China may not invest its diplomatic assets to persuade Pyongyang to abide by U.S. demands, considering that North Korea has not been a security threat to China since 1949. In addition, the North Korean nuclear crisis helped China to achieve one of its foreign policy objectives. "Reducing the American presence and influence in Asia remained a major goal for many Chinese leaders. The longer the nuclear crisis could be dragged out short of a war, the more China stood to benefit: The United States would look weak and vacillating, while China's leverage—as the only major power left with influence over North Korea—would grow."[390] China's other main concern was to avoid a

[387]Garrett and Glaser, "Looking Across the Yalu," 543.

[388]Quoted in John B. Wolfsthal, "International Pressure Intensifies on North Korean Bomb," Arms Control Today, December 1991, 20.

[389]Wolfsthal, "International Pressure Intensifies on North Korean Bomb," 20.

[390]Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 75.

second Korean War, which could cause a large number of Korean refugees to flee into China. Thus, China may not support any measure, such as UN sanctions, that increases the possibility of war.[391]

After North Korea's announcement of its withdrawal from the IAEA in March 1993, Washington and its allies were considering UN sanctions. China publicly opposed imposing harsh measures against North Korea or even bringing the matter before the UN Security Council. In late March, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen once again made clear China's position: "We support patient consultations to reach an appropriate solution. If the matter goes before the Security Council, that will only complicate things."[392] China had another reason to oppose the legitimacy of sanctions from any outside actor. China was in diplomatic confrontation with the United States because of Washington's effort to link the extension of most-favored-nations (MFN) trading status and China's human right practices.[393]

China's rationale for opposing sanctions against North Korea arose from its own interests, including fear of instability that could harm its broader economic and political interests, and from its paranoia about U.S. policies, rather than from common interests with Pyongyang. North Korea, however, clearly benefited from China's unintentional support. On May 11, 1993, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 825, urging North Korea to open sites to IAEA inspections and reconsider its decision to withdraw from the NPT. China abstained. The day after this resolution, North Korea rejected the IAEA's demands.[394]

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[391]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 267.

[392]Quoted in Nicholas D. Kristof, "China Opposes UN over North Korea," New York Times, March 24, 1993.

[393]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 251.

[394]Ibid., 310, footnote.

3. Japan and North Korea

In addition to China and Russia, Japan is North Korea's main diplomatic target. Notwithstanding Kim Il-Sung's personality cult, based mainly on his image as a leader in an anti-Japanese struggle, North Korea considers Japan a potential source of economic support.[395] It would also be a great political gain if the North gains official Japanese recognition. Japan tried to maintain better relations with North Korea than either South Korea or the United States for a variety of reasons. Familiarity with Korea acquired during the colonial era, and geographic proximity gave Japan access to both Koreas. However, because of the potential for leftist disruption by a large group of pro-Pyongyang ethnic Koreans in Japan, and a desire to lower tensions by pacifying North Korea which suspects a U.S.-ROK-Japan strategic plot against the North, Japan traditionally pursued a more independent policy toward North Korea for better relations.[396]

In 1990 Pyongyang was losing its diplomatic competition with Seoul. North Korea was betrayed by Moscow's diplomatic relations with Seoul. As a counterbalance to this gloomy situation, North Korea approached Japan for diplomatic normalization and economic assistance. Kanemaru Shin, Japanese Vice Chairman of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, advocated the improvement of relations with Pyongyang. Kanemaru visited Pyongyang in September 1990, and suggested compensation to North Korea for Japan's wrongdoing both for the Japanese colonial period and for the post-World War II

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[395]Macdonald, The Koreans, 260.

[396]Edward A. Olsen, "The Politics of Adversary Relations: The United States, Japan, and North Korea," Korea Observer 14, no.4 (Winter 1983): 354-59; Ralph Clough, Embattled Korea: The Rivalry for International Support (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1987), 352-355.

era. Formal talks on recognition were held in January and March 1991. Japan suggested extending billions of yen in reparations payments, loans, and credits to North Korea.[397]

The security issue surrounding the nuclear crisis, however, outweighed the potential benefits of closer ties to North Korea. In November, Secretary of State James Baker, after visiting Seoul, went to Tokyo and had a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa. After the meeting, Japan promised not to normalize diplomatic relations with Pyongyang or provide economic aid—a key North Korean objective—until North Korea accepts full-scope IAEA safeguards and dismantles its reprocessing facility.[398] Japan felt a serious threat from North Korea's potential nuclear capability with its long-range missiles that can reach Japan. Therefore, Japan accepted U.S. and South Korean requests; however, Japan does not favor increasing pressure that could jeopardize the Northern regime, and possibly send unwanted refugees to Japan.[399]

4. Analysis

The North Korean Nuclear case weakly supports Hypothesis 4:

The possibility of political challenge is high if a weaker state has strong support from a powerful "third-party" state.

North Korea's alliance relations with its major allies influenced North Korea's nuclear policy in two ways. First, as both Moscow and Beijing prefer Seoul to Pyongyang in their diplomatic relations, North Korea might seek nuclear weapons to reduce its

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[397]"A Knock on the Nuclear Door," Newsweek, April 29, 1991, 38-40.

[398]Wolfsthal, "International Pressure Intensifies on North Korean Bomb," 20.

[399]When UN sanctions were proposed by the U.S., Japan could have contributed by cutting off Pyongyang's Chongryun money. However, Japan would not do that. "One reason is fear of Pyongyang-inspired terrorism. Another is the suspicion in political circles that Chongryun has plenty of dirt on the illicit funding of leading politicians in the ruling coalition and opposition Liberal Democratic Party by Japanese—Koreans who operate money—spinning 'Pachinko' (pinball) parlor in Japan." Ed Paisley, "Prepared for the Worst," Far Eastern Economic Review, February 10, 1994, 22-23.

dependence on security assistance from both China and the Soviet Union.[400] The meeting between South Korean President Roh and Gorbachev in San Francisco in June 1990, quickly weakened Soviet-North Korean relations.[401] Pyongyang was not consulted in advance on the San Francisco meeting. Their reaction was gloomy: "We consider that the president of the Soviet Union, an ally of ours, is quite able to analyze and judge what a serious political consequence will be entailed by this meeting with Roh Tae-Woo..." a North Korea Foreign Ministry spokesman said.[402]

In September 1990 Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze pressured Pyongyang to sign the safeguards agreement.[403] At the meeting , North Korean Foreign Minister Kim Young-nam warned that the DPRK would embark on a "nuclear development" program if Moscow further improved ties to Seoul and that it would recognize Japan's claim to four northern islands occupied by the Soviet Union.[404] Moscow, in turn, threatened to cut off all nuclear cooperation if the North's nuclear facilities were not placed under IAEA safeguards.[405] Especially when the Soviet Union opened diplomatic relations with South Korea in 1991, "the North feared for its safety in the absence of its former ally and in the face of continued U.S. backing of the South."[406]

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[400]Song Young-Sun, "Korean Nuclear Issue," 475; The Cuban missile crisis in October 1962, also gave Kim Il-Sung an important lesson. He saw the Soviet Union abandoning Cuba, its main ally, in the fierce confrontation with the U.S. for its own security. After the Cuban missile crisis, Kim Il-Sung began to doubt the credibility of the security shield provided by Moscow and Beijing. Mansourov, "The North Korean Nuclear Program," 28.

[401]New York Times, June 5, 1990.

[402]Shim Jae Hoon and Susumu Awanohara, "Perestroika Pay-off", Far Eastern Economic Review, June 14, 1990.

[403]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 236.

[404]Jane's Defense Weekly, January 12, 1991, 46.

[405]"Soviet Warn N. Korea on A-Controls", Washington Post, April 16, 1991.

[406]Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 19.

China also did not support the North's nuclear weapons program. Thus, the North's effort to build a nuclear bomb was a reaction to isolation from its allies. This is the opposite of Hypothesis 4, which considers strong foreign support as a major condition for weaker states' political challenges.

Second, though it was not in China's interest to support Pyongyang's nuclear policy, China's objection to imposing harsh measures on North Korea certainly induced Pyongyang to object to IAEA inspections, confront the threats of sanctions by the United States and its allies, and demand further concessions from the United States.

In sum, Hypothesis 4 is only weakly confirmed. On the one hand, despite strong power allies' objections to Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program, North Korea continued its bomb program. On the other hand, even China's unintentional support—unintentional because China objected to imposing sanctions on Pyongyang for its own interests—made North Korea confront the United States. Either making nuclear weapons or demanding considerable concessions was a serious political challenge to the United States or South Korea.

F. COERCIVE PRESSURE PERCEIVED BY NORTH KOREA

This section examines how North Korea's perception of a threat affected its decision to initiate a political challenge. It explains that North Korea's perception of threats from stronger opponents, mainly the United States and South Korea, affected its initiation of political challenges, but could not be a sufficient cause for all of its challenges.

The first and the most fundamental motivation for North Korean nuclear weapons development was a reactionary response to a U.S. nuclear threat—that is, to deter U.S. nuclear use and to counter the U.S. nuclear umbrella, and in reaction to the South Korean

nuclear bomb program in the 1970s.[407] When the United States and South Korea demanded that North Korea accept full-scope IAEA inspection, Pyongyang viewed such requests as a threat to its national sovereignty. However, these explanations obscure the real causes of the nuclear crisis. Since the late 1980s, North Korea's threat has come from its internal vulnerability rather than the external threats. Moreover, U.S. and South Korean nuclear policy against North Korea was a response to the North's political challenges. Therefore, it is difficult to regard North Korea's threat perception from the United States and South Korea as the motivation for its political challenges.

1. Threat Perception and Nuclear Weapons Development

U.S. nuclear threats to North Korea began in the early 1950s. The experience of the Korean War gave Kim Il-Sung a sense of nuclear fear. Both General MacArthur and the Eisenhower administration seriously considered using nuclear weapons against North Korean troops and even Chinese forces in Manchuria.[408] Kim Il-Sung learned this from American War documents made public in the late 1950s and was shocked. He feared that one day North Korea could become the helpless prey of U.S. nuclear weapons.[409]

Even after the Korean War, North Korea felt various U.S. nuclear threats. In January, 1958, the U.S.-led United Nations Command, in response to North Korean violations of the armistice, introduced nuclear-capable weapons systems into South Korea, including 280-mm nuclear artillery and Honest John nuclear missiles.[410] South

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[407]see Bermudez, "North Korea's Nuclear Program," 408; Gerald Segal and David Mussington, "North Korea—Where to From here," Jane's Intelligence Review, August 1994, 374-375.

[408]Roger Dingman, "Atomic Diplomacy During the Korean War," International Security 13, no.3, (Winter 1988/89):50-91; Rosemary J. Foot, "Nuclear Coercion and the Ending of the Korean Conflict," International Security 13, no.3 (Winter 1988/89): 92-112.

[409]Tai-Sung An, "North Korea's Nuclear Weapon's Program," 676.

[410]Peter Hayes, Pacific Powerkeg; American nuclear dilemma in Korea (Toronto: Lexington Books, 1991), 35.

Korea's decision in the early 1970s to launch a secret nuclear weapons program presented a threat to the North.[411] In the late 1970s South Korea gained a security guarantee, the nuclear umbrella, from the United States at the expense of her nuclear weapons program. Until they were removed, Pyongyang felt constant nuclear threats from the deployed U.S. tactical nuclear weapons in South Korea.[412] In 1977 South Korea and the United States agreed to conduct the Team Spirit joint military exercise annually, which North Korea considered a "nuclear test war" and "preliminary nuclear war."[413]

Throughout the 1980s, the tension on the Korean peninsula increased. On October 9, 1983, a North Korean bomb attack killed 21 people in Rangoon, Burma, including four South Korean Cabinet ministers. The United States warned North Korea that it would not exclude "nuclear retaliation" if Pyongyang launched another attack on South Korea.[414] South Korea was placed in the "vital" interest area, in which Seoul could rely on U.S. nuclear retaliation under the Reagan administration.[415] It was also an open fact that the United States buried 21 atomic demolition munitions (ADMs) within a mile of the Demilitarized Zone between North and South Korea and at Uijongbu, North of Seoul.[416] Moreover, in the early 1980s, the Pentagon considered South Korea the most proper

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[411]Mansourov, 29; For South Korea's nuclear bomb program, see Peter Hayes, Pacific Powerkeg, 203-207, 209-212 and Selig S. Harrison, "A Yen for the Bomb?", Washington Post, October 31, 1993, c2.

[412]The United States had 60 nuclear bombs stored at Kunsan Airbase and 40 nuclear tipped artillery shells in South Korea until president Bush announced their complete withdrawal in late 1991. New York Times, October 27, 1991, p.14.

[413]"Memorandum of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the DPRK," Press Release by DPRK Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations, no.36, (July 3, 1984).

[414]Seoul YONHAP, November 14, 1983. This statement came after the meeting between U.S. secretary of state George Shultz and South Korean Foreign Minister Yi, Won-kyong in Seoul.

[415]Korea Herald, November 20, 1983, p.1.

[416]Washington Post, May 2, 1983, p.c13. FBIS-EAS-89-080, April 27, 1989.

place to use newly developed "neutron" bombs.[417] These threats must have energized North Korea's search for nuclear weapons as the ultimate deterrence to forestall U.S. nuclear use.[418]

2. Threat Perception and Nuclear Diplomacy

In early 1989 North Korea shut down the 30MWt reactor and removed some fuel rods from the core. It also was working on a spent-fuel reprocessing facility. Washington and South Korea concluded that Pyongyang was trying to develop nuclear weapons. Both demanded that Pyongyang verify its claimed peaceful nuclear intentions through a North-South nuclear inspection regime or IAEA inspections. Pyongyang, however, allowed the IAEA inspectors into only several facilities and refused to accept full-scope inspections by claiming that such inspections would be a threat to its sovereignty. Kim Il-Sung clearly stated North Korea's view of U.S. and South Korean demands on full-scope inspections.

> The reason we refuse inspection in depth is just this: we only have secret defense systems and organizations and the Americans know, perhaps, that we have no nuclear weapons, but they want to know what exactly our defense system with conventional weapons is. That is the reason they want the UN atomic agency to make inspections in depth. We can not accept that. Besides the question of our sovereignty and national dignity and pride, we have our secrets. ... What they want us to be is a man without defense secrets, just a naked man. We can not accept that. We would rather accept a war. If they decide to make war, we accept the war, the challenge we are prepared for.[419]

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[417]Sam Cohen first conceived the neutron bomb in South Korea. On a secret 1951 mission to Seoul as a Defense Department Consultant, he noticed a large bridge to the North on Han River that was impervious to conventional bombing. North Korean tanks and troops rushed into the capital across the bridge. A smaller nuclear bomb would have done the job, but it would have devastated Seoul in the process and left deadly radiation in its wake. Had neutron bombs been available for the battle to recapture Seoul, Cohen says, "their application would have represented a highly discriminate attack." Washington Post, May 2, 1983, p. C13.

[418]Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 21.

[419]Quoted in Nate Thayer, "Nude, Absolutely Naked," Far Eastern Economic Review, June 23, 15.

Pressures on North Korea to adhere to its nuclear obligations continued. At the June 1992 summit between Russian President Yeltsin and U.S. President Bush, the two sides issued a joint statement calling on the North to comply with "its obligations under the NPT and Joint Declaration, including IAEA safeguards as well as credible and effective bilateral nuclear inspections."[420] On February 9, 1993, the IAEA requested Pyongyang to allow IAEA special inspections at two suspected nuclear waste sites.

North Korea's reaction was harsh. North Korean official newspaper, *No-dong*, argued that the IAEA move represented "a new plot to impair the prestige of the DPRK and isolate it" as well as "an unpardonable provocation aimed at infringing on and violating its sovereignty and dignity."[421] The Korean People's Army especially opposed setting a precedent of outside inspection-on-demand of their military facilities. Such inspections could easily reveal the conditions of the North's military forces, and would also become a threat to regime stability by allowing flows of outside information and influence into the country.[422]

Therefore, any special inspections were regarded as a threat to regime survival that should be prevented even at the cost of war. The North warned that "If any special inspections and sanctions are enforced on us, and if the sacred lands of our fatherland are trampled underfoot by big countries, this will be a dangerous fuse that will derive all lands, including the North and the South, into the crushing calamities of war."[423]

One important U.S. rationale for signing the Agreed Framework with the North was to open the isolated nation to outside ideas and to encourage it to develop stable

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[420]Reiss, Bridled Ambition, 243.

[421]Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 96.

[422]Ibid., 107.

[423]Cited in FIBIS-EAS, February 22, 1993, 11-13.

relations with South Korea. That is why Washington strongly rejected North Korean requests for rejecting the two South Korean nuclear reactors, which would bring hundreds or thousands of South Korean workers, along with western ideas and culture. This would be poison to the regime. North Koreans are impoverished and propagandized to believe that only the present regime can protect them from malevolent outside forces. If North Koreans were introduced to the standard of living of South Korea, it would be difficult to imagine that the system of political and social control could endure. What to the west looks like a carrot (economic aid or joint-venture investments) and sticks (threats), looks to Pyongyang like a "choice between poison carrots and sticks."[424] Thus, North Korea vehemently refused to accept South Korean-made reactors. It only agreed to sign a vague agreement with more concessions from the United States.[425]

3. Analysis

North Korea's reactions to U.S. nuclear policy weakly confirms Hypothesis 5:

The possibility of political challenge is high if a weaker state believes that the coercive pressure from the stronger state is intolerable and too expensive to accept.

The nuclear policy of the North was clearly influenced by its perceptions of threats from the U.S. nuclear policy during the Cold War, and the U.S. nuclear nonproliferation policy after the Cold War. The former led the North to develop nuclear weapons as the ultimate means for deterring the U.S. nuclear threats. The latter endangered regime survival with a new kind of threat, opening an isolated North Korea to the outside world, revealing all its

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[424]Bracken, "Risks and Promises in the Two Koreas," 58-59.

[425]North Korea asked the Clinton Administration to provide another $1 billion worth of extra economic and technical assistance under the Agreed Framework. Korea Herald, February 9, 1995; "The reactor model, selected by KEDO, will be the advanced version of U.S. origin design and technology currently under production." Pyongyang Times, June 17, 95, p.1.

shortcomings to both the outsiders and, more importantly, its people. North Korea chose to resist such inspections while demanding more concessions from the West.

In retrospect, the U.S and South Korean policy objectives toward the North Korean nuclear program evolved from "roll back" to containment, to a demand for changing the regime itself. First, both Seoul and Washington tried to roll back North Korea's nuclear weapons program by instituting the North-South regime. Next, the broad and thorough approach was tried to contain Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program at the current level. Finally, the Agreed Framework was used a means of changing the "hermit kingdom" by opening it to the outside world. All of these policies, however, were viewed by Pyongyang as threats to the survival of the North Korean regime.

The argument of Hypothesis five, however, does not explain the specific timing of North Korea's political challenges. U.S. nuclear threats have existed on the Korean peninsula since 1950. After the Cold War, the U.S. nuclear threat was reduced. Washington withdrew all of its tactical nuclear weapons from South Korea, and Seoul unilaterally announced a non-nuclear policy. Moreover, U.S. and South Korean demands on North Korea to accept IAEA full-scope inspections were reactions to the North's efforts to build nuclear weapons. In other words, North Korean nuclear policy was calculated for its own purposes rather than as a reaction to external threats. Therefore, the North Korean nuclear crisis only weakly supports the assertion of Hypothesis five because it was only initiated as a result of U.S. nuclear threats.

G. SUMMARY

This chapter analyzed the motivations behind the North Korean nuclear crisis, and tested them with five main hypotheses. The most significant variables that account for

the North's political challenge were its political-military strategy and changing domestic politics.

The first hypothesis, that the possibility of political challenge is high if a weaker state's decision-maker believes in the efficacy of a successful limited aims/fait accompli strategy, is well illustrated by the North Korean nuclear crisis. To survive as a sovereign state, North Korea had to provide security against both external and internal threats. The North might have viewed nuclear weapons as the ultimate means of security. Since the late 1980s, however, the real threat was internal in nature. The North had succession problems because Kim Jung-Il lacked political legitimacy. It also had devastating economic problems, so it had to work out a political-military strategy that could solve both external and internal problems: a limited aims/fait accompli strategy.

North Korea chose the limited aims strategy to continue the development of nuclear weapons and wrench economic aid from the West. These two aims made a political fait accompli possible, because they cannot be easily reversed once acquired. The North Korean limited aims/fait accompli strategy was pursued with dangerous brinkmanship and controlled pressure strategies that were aimed at manipulating the allies' shared risk of crisis escalation.

The second hypothesis, concerning a weaker state's offensive or deterrent capability as an incentive to its political challenge, is weakly supported. North Korea's offensive and deterrent capabilities supported its political-military strategies by dissuading the United States and its allies from employing military strikes or economic sanctions. However, North Korea's military capability does not explain why it initiated the nuclear crisis when it did, because the country has maintained significant offensive and deterrent capabilities since the division of the Korean peninsula.

The third hypothesis, that the possibility of political challenge is high if the power structure changes in a weaker state and when a militaristic group with little legitimacy assumes control of the decision-making process, is strongly confirmed by the North Korean nuclear crisis. North Korea's decisions to withdraw from the NPT in March, 1993, and unmonitored unloading of the 30 MW reactor fuel were products of divergence in its decision-making groups. Development of nuclear weapons and dangerous nuclear diplomacy were used for enhancing the legitimacy of Kim Jung-Il and the regime, and ensuring its survival.

The fourth hypothesis, that the possibility of political challenge is high if a weaker state has strong support from a powerful "third-party" state, is also weakly supported. China's objection to employing strong measures against North Korea clearly induced North Korea to resist U.S. and South Korean demands for IAEA inspections. Neither China nor the former Soviet Union, however, supported North Korea's endeavor to develop nuclear weapons.

The fifth hypothesis, concerning a weaker state's political challenge as a reaction to the coercive pressure from the stronger adversary, is weakly confirmed. The nuclear threats from the United States and South Korea prompted North Korea to develop its own nuclear weapons. Coercive pressures from the United States and its allies, however, only weakly account for the North's initiation of political challenges, because the North's nuclear policy during the crisis was a highly calculated strategy rather than a reactionary one.

In dealing with the North Korean political challenge, both the United States and South Korea carefully coordinated their policies to achieve the objective. The United States froze the North Korean nuclear program well before the 1995 NPT Review and

Extension Conference, while South Korea could also persuade Washington to link the North-South dialogue with any development in the Agreed Framework.

VII. CONCLUSION

A. RATIONALES FOR POLITICAL CHALLENGES BY NORTH KOREA

The key rationale for the North Korean political challenge was its belief that its limited aims/fait accompli strategy would succeed in accomplishing its objectives: the development of nuclear weapons and the gain of economic benefits from the West. North Korea is declining in economic, military, and diplomatic assets vis-à-vis those of South Korea. North Korea's economy cannot feed its people, and its military capability is rapidly declining. North Korea has been isolated by its former allies, China and Russia, who favor relations with the South. All these difficulties greatly aggravated North Korea's domestic political difficulties, including the legitimacy of its leadership, and the survival of its regime. These domestic difficulties strongly motivated North Korean leaders to pursue a tough and dangerous foreign policy to achieve limited aims. In the process of waging tough diplomacy through brinkmanship and controlled pressure, the legitimacy of its leadership could be enhanced by playing a powerful role in international diplomacy. Furthermore, as the North achieves its limited aims, the achievement itself enhances the legitimacy of both the regime and its leadership.

Therefore, North Korean political-military strategies during the nuclear crisis can be seen as a product of sophisticated calculations. The North's belief in the success of its limited aims/fait accompli strategy was enhanced by both its offensive weapons capability and China's ambiguous verbal support. The U.S. and South Korean coercive pressures did not account for North Korean political challenges. Although the U.S. nuclear threat was one of the key motivations for the North's nuclear weapons development program, the real threats have come from the internal rather than the external arena since the late 1980s. Moreover, U.S. and South Korean demands for full-scope

IAEA inspections and threats of economic sanctions and military strikes on North Korean nuclear facilities were responses to the North's political challenges.

In conclusion, the rationales for North Korean political challenges came from Pyongyang's belief in the success of a limited aims/fait accompli strategy and domestic political difficulties. The North's decision to pursue political challenges also was supported by its offensive weapons capability and China's ambiguous verbal support.

B. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The behavior of weaker states in the international system has received little scholarly attention. The major literature on the behavior of states in international relations regards self-determined offensive challenges from weaker states against stronger states as unusual, if not impossible cases. Balance of power and deterrence theories, which are widely applied to defense policies, assume that weak states will not likely challenge much stronger states.

As the North Korean nuclear crisis shows, however, a state inferior in overall power capabilities may still challenge its stronger adversary, not for military victory but for political advantages, by making choices that are the result of rational calculations. In the case of the North Korean nuclear crisis, these choices depended largely on a particular military-political strategy and domestic political changes. Offensive capability and strong foreign support only enhanced the decisions to initiate a political challenge.

The results of this study have a limited application. Although the hypotheses were largely supported, this study provides only a detailed understanding of North Korean motivations in the nuclear crisis. For more generalized knowledge on North Korea's motivations for political challenge, one would need to compare the results of this

study with other North Korean political challenges, such as the Pueblo incident in 1968 or the shooting down of the EC-121 aircraft in 1969.

C. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The United States and South Korea place deterrence at the center of their defense policy against North Korea. The policy assumes that both the United States and South Korea could deter North Korean aggression by persuading Pyongyang that the costs of such aggression outweigh the benefits. The methods used for persuasion are maintaining a strong military capability and sending a message to the North about the strong U.S. and South Korean will to defend their interests. This "policy of strength" has been successful on the Korean peninsula, in that it has prevented a second Korean War for several decades. The North Korean nuclear crisis clearly shows the limitations of deterrence in countering political challenges. The U.S. nuclear deterrence policy may well have activated the North's nuclear weapons program. Moreover, U.S. threats of sanctions and military strikes may have enhanced the legitimacy of the North's leadership, which sought confrontational foreign policies to consolidate support from its people and divert attention from domestic problems. In fact, it was often the United States and South Korea who were deterred from employing strong measures by the threats of retaliation from the North.

The ideal policy for the United States and South Korea would be to show firmness without provoking the North's perception of threat.[426] While maintaining a strong united front, the United States should require neither military strikes nor economic sanctions but steady insistence that North Korea respect international laws and treaty

[426]This conclusion is coincident with the argument of Paul K. Huth. According to Huth, the main concern of crisis management is how to combine elements of conflictual and cooperative behavior in an overall policy while avoiding armed conflict. "Sole reliance on threats and military shows of force is insufficient to resolve the underlying political conflict in a crisis." Huth, Extended Deterrence, 199-213.

obligations. South Korea would pacify the North by providing more benign economic aids, which could enhance Seoul's position in further nuclear negotiations with Pyongyang.

There are three more lessons from the North Korean nuclear crisis. First, the motivations of an initiator of political challenges are more complicated than a simple calculation of deterrence. A good strategy should be based on a clear understanding of the reasoning initiators may use as they decide to pursue political challenges.

Second, once a policy is chosen, it should be employed in the early stage of the crisis. This study showed that the North's motivations for nuclear development have evolved over time, and its demands for concessions from the West also increased with the development of the crisis. If the United States and South Korea had pursued a broad and thorough approach in the early stage of the crisis, they could have prevented the withdrawal of the North from the NPT in 1993, and the unloading of the fuel rods from the 30MWt reactor in 1994.

Third, multilateral cooperation is an important factor for policies against political challenges. Divergent interests among states make it difficult to find a policy that satisfies them all at the same time. Although the United States, South Korea, Japan, China, and Russia could agree on the objective—ending the North's nuclear program—they could not agree on the right method to accomplish it. Because of the danger of escalation of the crisis, only the United States and South Korea agreed on strong measures against the North. The North Korean nuclear problem needs further leadership from the United States, helping its allies to form a united front to North Korea.

APPENDIX

Table 1. Military Expenditure, Armed Forces, GNP, 1983-1993.

YEAR	ME* (billions) Constant 1993	ARMED FORCES (thousands)	GNP (billions) Constant 1993	Ratio ME / GNP	GNP/CAPITA (dollars) Constant 1993
NORTH KOREA					
1983	6.91	784	34.5	20.0	1825
1984	6.86	784	34.3	20.0	1781
1985	6.88	784	34.4	20.0	1856
1986	6.93	838	34.6	20.0	1738
1987	6.96	838	34.8	20.0	1716
1988	6.94	842	34.7	20.0	1682
1989	6.82	1040	34.1	20.0	1624
1990	6.47	1200	32.3	20.0	1513
1991	4.89	1200	24.4	20.0	1122
1992	5.62	1200	22.4	25.0	1011
1993	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
SOUTH KOREA					
1983	5.61	602	101.8	5.5	2552
1984	5.67	602	111.3	5.1	2754
1985	8.22	600	164.8	5.0	4040
1986	8.68	604	184.5	4.7	4460
1987	8.73	604	207.2	4.2	4946
1988	9.30	626	232.1	4.0	5479
1989	10.24	647	248.0	4.1	5796
1990	11.33	650	272.7	4.2	9285
1991	10.92	750	296.4	3.7	6785
1992	11.64	750	311.3	3.7	7052
1993	11.93	750	328.7	3.6	7368

* Military Expenditures NA: Not available

North Korea's military expenditure and GNP are estimated by U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA).

source: World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1993-1994

Table 2. Military Capability of South and North Korea

CLASSIFICATION	NORTH KOREA	SOUTH KOREA
ARMY	1,000,000	520,000
NAVY	45,000	60,000
AIR FORCE	82,000	53,000
Helicopters	290	603
Combat Aircraft	730	445
Surface Combatants	413a	183b
Submarines	25	4
Tanks	3,700c	1,800d
Armored Vehicles	2,500	3,550
Field Artillery	9,080	4,540
U.S. Forces in S. Korea Army		26,000
U.S. Air Force		9,500

a: Including 387 patrol size combatants. The North has only 3 frigates.

b: Including 9 destroyers, 29 frigates.

c: Including T-34, T-54/-55, T-62. The North has only 370 T-62s which are comparable to the South's Type 88 model.[427]

d: Including 450 Type 88 model.

Source: The Military Balance 1993-1994

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[427]Lee, Hyock-Sup, and Reinhard Drifte, "The Internationalization of the Korean Security Issue: The Role of Building Institutions," The Korean Journal of Defense Analysis 6, no.2 (Winter 1995): 177-179.

Table 3. Value of Arms Transfers by Major Supplier to North and South Korea (In Millions of Current Dollars)

Cumulative Years	Supplier / Recipient	TOTAL	USSR RUSSIA	UNITED STATES	FRANCE	CHINA	UNITED KINGDOM	Others
1984-1988	N. Korea	2,370	2,200	0	20	50	0	100
	S. Korea	2,570	0	2,500	10	0	40	20
1987-1991	N. Korea	2,375	2,300	0	0	40	0	35
	S. Korea	3,045	0	3,000	10	0	20	15
1991-1993	N. Korea	105	100	0	0	0	0	5
	S. Korea	1,810	5	975	60	0	460	310a

a: Germany provided $300 million worth of arms to S. Korea

Source: World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers 1989, 1991-1992, 1993-1994.

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